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**W**elcome to the last 2015 Vintage Roadscene. Of course, we'll have the January 2016 issue on sale in December, so I'll wait until then to wish you all the compliments of the season.

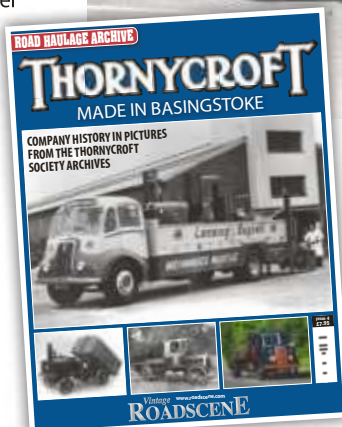
However, we have some good news for everybody. Regular contributor, Malcolm Bates and I have purchased the main part of the photographic archives of the late 'Steve' Stevens-Stratten. This means we now have available a large number of pictures, brochures and other material, which he amassed, notably during his time as the founding editor of Vintage Roadscene. There are so many photographs, mostly taken by Steve, which have never been seen before, which we will enjoy bringing to you in future issues of the magazine. Of course, this is in addition to the other archives to which we already have access.

The addition of so many more photographs – which we ought to call the 'Vintage Roadscene Photographic Library' as Steve did in the past – will also enhance the scope of the Road Haulage Archive series, which will be continuing during 2016, with six more titles scheduled to be available over the coming year. These will cover a range of subjects, including Municipal Vehicles, Fairground Lorries and Heavy Haulage, using pictures from Steve's archives among others.

Meanwhile, the latest of this year's Road Haulage Archive titles is now available, 'Thornycroft – Made in Basingstoke', put together with the assistance of members of the Thornycroft Society and using their archives, for which we are most grateful.

This new publication certainly went down well, as I sold all my stock at the recent Classic Commercial Show at Donington, which has now become a Kelsey Media event, along with the other Independent Event Management (IEM) shows, the other classic event at Malvern in March and the Shropshire Truck Show in September.

This issue of Vintage Roadscene seems to have taken on a couple of themes, with military and



Here are a couple of pictures from 'Steve' Stevens-Stratten's archive, which we have just acquired, and which could have made it into the Thornycroft 'Road Haulage Archive' issue. Steve took the photo above of the Thornycroft 'J' Type, preserved in the livery of Wethereds brewery, back in 1970. This lorry, dating originally from 1919, was modernised with pneumatic tyres, and has been seen at many rallies over the years, having survived beyond World War II in service.

The other picture below shows a late-1930s Thornycroft Sturdy, belonging to Timmis & Tudor, flour millers, of Shrewsbury. It is being laboriously loaded with sacks of grin or flour. The lettering on the radiator 'Bread is Better' is interesting, especially when compared with the 'Beer is Best' slogan we've been looking at in our 'Those were the Drays' series.

ex-military vehicles vying for prominence with delivery vehicles, whether for beer, biscuits or the wider range of products from the Co-op – which could also very well form another subject for a Road Haulage Archive issue in the future.

It is amazing what a wide range of goods and services have been provided over the years by the Co-operative Societies – and still are in many places – which, of course, have involved many different types of vehicle.

When I was a boy, in the 1950s-'60s, in Lowestoft, Suffolk, we had all the usual grocery, bread, milk, butchers, coal and other Co-op delivery vehicles, as well as a CWS (Co-operative Wholesale Society) canning factory in the town. Along with another canning company called Mortons and, of course, the Bird's Eye quick-frozen foods factories, this meant an influx every summer of vehicles of various types, bringing peas for the factories.

The Co-op, as has Bird's Eye done more recently – although no longer in Lowestoft to my knowledge – removed the peas from the vines in

the field, and they were brought to the factory by hauliers, like T J Kidner of Beccles, in its livestock transporters – cattle trucks in those days – during their 'off-season'. Mortons and Bird's Eye then had vining stations in the town, to which the peas were brought by farm tractors and trailers and high-sided tippers.

The whole business was a joy for us, as youthful lorry-spotters (with the added bonus of pinching some raw peas to eat), and the whole thing took on a large-scale, almost military operation, akin to the sugar beet 'campaign', as they call bringing that harvest to the sugar factories, which still carries on, and still offers some interesting farmers' vehicles.

Ah, memories; if only I'd had the foresight to use a camera, but at least we now have Steve's 'VRPL' to make the most of...

## ON THE COVER...



We've been promising pictures of Co-op vehicles for some time, so this month's 'Scenes Past', featuring the varied fleet of Burslem Industrial Co-operative Society, will be welcomed by many readers. Although most of the commercials serving this Potteries Co-op were Bedfords, they were used on a variety of work, in line with the wide range of businesses encompassed by the Co-operative movement.





# COVENTRY'S **YELLOW** FIRE ENGINES



*Ron Henderson looks at a controversial decision to change the colour of the city's fire appliances.*

**T**he colour red has long been associated with fire or danger and was therefore adopted as the traditional colour for fire engines. This colour was said to denote to the public that the vehicle was on an urgent mission. The colour red was also said to project a basic psychological sense and meaning of danger to the human animal. But red has not always been universal for fire engines in the United Kingdom.

Prior to World War II many of the wooden bodied Braidwood appliances featured natural varnished wood finish. Historically, dark green was a popular colour and, post-war, this was the standard livery for the Auxiliary Fire Service. During World War II, there was the standard grey livery of the wartime appliances. Post-war, the

appliances of both Newcastle & Gateshead and Leicestershire & Rutland joint fire authorities were painted burgundy. A natural aluminium finish was also popular after World War II with many brigades.

However, none of these liveries was as controversial as the novel colour scheme introduced by Coventry Fire Brigade in 1966, or the other liveries that followed thereafter. During the 1960s, several factors had become apparent, which indicated that a change of

colour was necessary to assist the public in the quick recognition of fire appliances.

Firstly, the greatly increased volumes of traffic did not allow motor vehicle drivers sufficient time to make a distinction between the different types of vehicles encountered, unless there was some distinctive feature or colour. There was also a trend for an increasing variety of colours to be used for commercial vehicles, many of them being of a similar size and colour to fire engines, so much so, that some authorities

**Top:** This was the first yellow fire engine, a Dennis F36, constructed and finished to a special Coventry Fire Brigade design. This engine and its two sisters were dual-purpose fire-fighting and rescue appliances, equipped with cutting gear for use at road accidents. Uniquely, the hose reels had a dual function of supplying water to extinguish fires or compressed air for the cutting tools.

**Right:** The third of Coventry's initial 1966 batch of streamlined 'Coventry Yellow' fire engines had an appropriate '999' registration number and was equipped to carry a 50ft Merryweather wheeled escape ladder.







**Above:** A second batch of two new Dennis dual-purpose appliances, this time based on F43 chassis with automatic transmissions, was delivered to Coventry in 1969. Following the incorporation of the brigade into the West Midlands Fire Brigade in 1974, all of the yellow Coventry units were repainted in fluorescent red livery.

advocated that a law should be passed to restrict the colour red solely for fire service vehicles.

Although fire appliances had both audible and visual warning devices, it was thought necessary to supplement these by the provision of a distinctive colour. The final argument for a change of colour was that, during the hours of darkness, the colour red, depending upon the street lighting in use, diminished to brown or black.

It was suggested that, while these theories may or may not have had any foundation, what was certain was that the colour red no longer projected sufficient sense of danger or urgency and therefore: "...has virtually no value in serving as a warning colour in modern heavy traffic conditions".

In attempting to find a solution to these problems, Chief Fire Officer A E Leete, of Coventry Fire Brigade, enlisted the help of the Lanchester College of Technology, Coventry, to determine the most suitable colour for fire appliances. Colour response, determined spectroscopically, showed that the eye was most sensitive to yellow, whereas white was the colour that retained its brightness under all types of lighting equipment.

White was discounted as a warning colour for fire engines, because it was deemed a passive colour and communicated no sense of urgency.



**Above:** The delivery of the first yellow fire engines prompted the repainting of most, but not all existing units of the Coventry fleet. This classic Bedford RL water tender, part of the reserve fleet is easily recognisable as a former Auxiliary Fire Service 'Green Goddess'.

It was in no way distinctive and excessive effort and time would be required to maintain a reasonable appearance, retouching and matching of paintwork would prove difficult and ageing and discoloration would be much more noticeable than with other colours – Although it seemed to work OK for the ambulance service...

White therefore was eliminated and yellow chosen as the most practical colour, because it lost little colour value under artificial lighting conditions and also excited the human eye. Fluorescent colours were also considered, because of their excellent luminosity, but had little economic value in the fire service because





**Above:** West Sussex Fire Brigade was one of many authorities not totally convinced of the yellow concept and painted only some of its fleet yellow. This 1970 Dennis F44 water tender/ladder from Bognor Regis was one example of the fleet which was finished in a yellow livery.

the paint lost its luminosity in a relatively short period of time and would require repainting frequently.

Although the selection of yellow appeared somewhat revolutionary to the fire service, it was acknowledged that many other organisations used the colour for the safety of their vehicles, including National Carriers, Post Office Telephones engineers, British Rail, for its track maintenance vehicles and, further, much of the equipment employed on motorways and roadworks used yellow as a distinctive colour to facilitate easy identification.

So with the full backing of the local authority,



**Above:** This Ford Thames water tender with Miles bodywork was originally a red painted demonstrator. However, when it was later incorporated into the Ford Motor Company's factory brigade at Warley, Essex, it was repainted yellow. This was the first yellow industrial fire engine.



**Above:** Barnsley Fire Brigade re-painted some of its fleet yellow, although this Leyland emergency tender was completed from new in that colour. However, this was another yellow fire engine that was later repainted in the traditional red, after the brigade was incorporated into the new County of South Yorkshire Fire Brigade in April, 1974.

all new fire engines ordered by Coventry Fire Brigade were to be finished in a 'Coventry Yellow' livery, with the existing fleet to be repainted in the new livery. The brigade had just placed an order for a new generation of pumping appliances so, in October 1966, the first new yellow Dennis fire engine made its debut at the Chief Fire Officers' annual conference at Southport.

A totally new departure, its appearance

demonstrated the greatest livery change ever in the history of the British fire service. The conclusive experiments had demonstrated that yellow was the safest livery and also one that would aid the progress of a fire engine through heavy traffic situations. It follows that it should have therefore not been long before the colour was adopted by Britain's other fire authorities. Indeed it was by some, but for others further experiments and changes were afoot...





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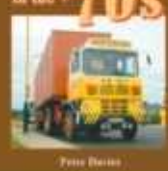
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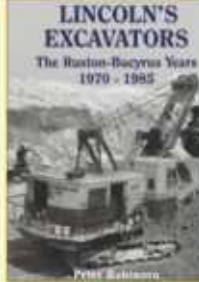
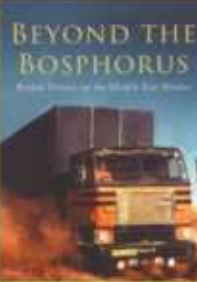
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1939 – Thornycroft Sturdy chassis-cabs for searchlight vehicles, pictured in the works yard awaiting delivery on 15th January 1939. Through the war period, there was a total of 13,000 wheeled vehicles produced.

# THORNYCROFT at War

*Mike Forbes looks at Thornycroft's contribution to the war effort during World War II.*

**T**he output of some of the UK's manufacturing industry, including vehicle makers like Vauxhall-Bedford has been well-documented over the years. The contribution of some other companies has been less well-known, including that of Thornycroft, the subject of the latest title in

our 'Road Transport Archive' series.

With the generous assistance of members of the Thornycroft Society, I have been able to put together a pretty comprehensive pictorial history of the company. I included some details of the early steam wagons and the 'J' Type 'Subsidy' lorries which Thornycroft produced for World War I and

military vehicle developments of the inter-war period.

However, there was not sufficient space to do justice to and make the most of the interesting pictures and details of the vehicles and other equipment which the company produced during those dark days from 1939 to 1945. The statistics

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- Balance Weights for Bristol Aero Engines
- Exploders for 4,000lb bombs
- 'Terrapin' development
- Gun Barrels



**Above:** 1942 – A wartime 'Nubian' Type TF/AC4/1 four wheel drive General Service vehicle, of which 3,500 were built 1941-1945.

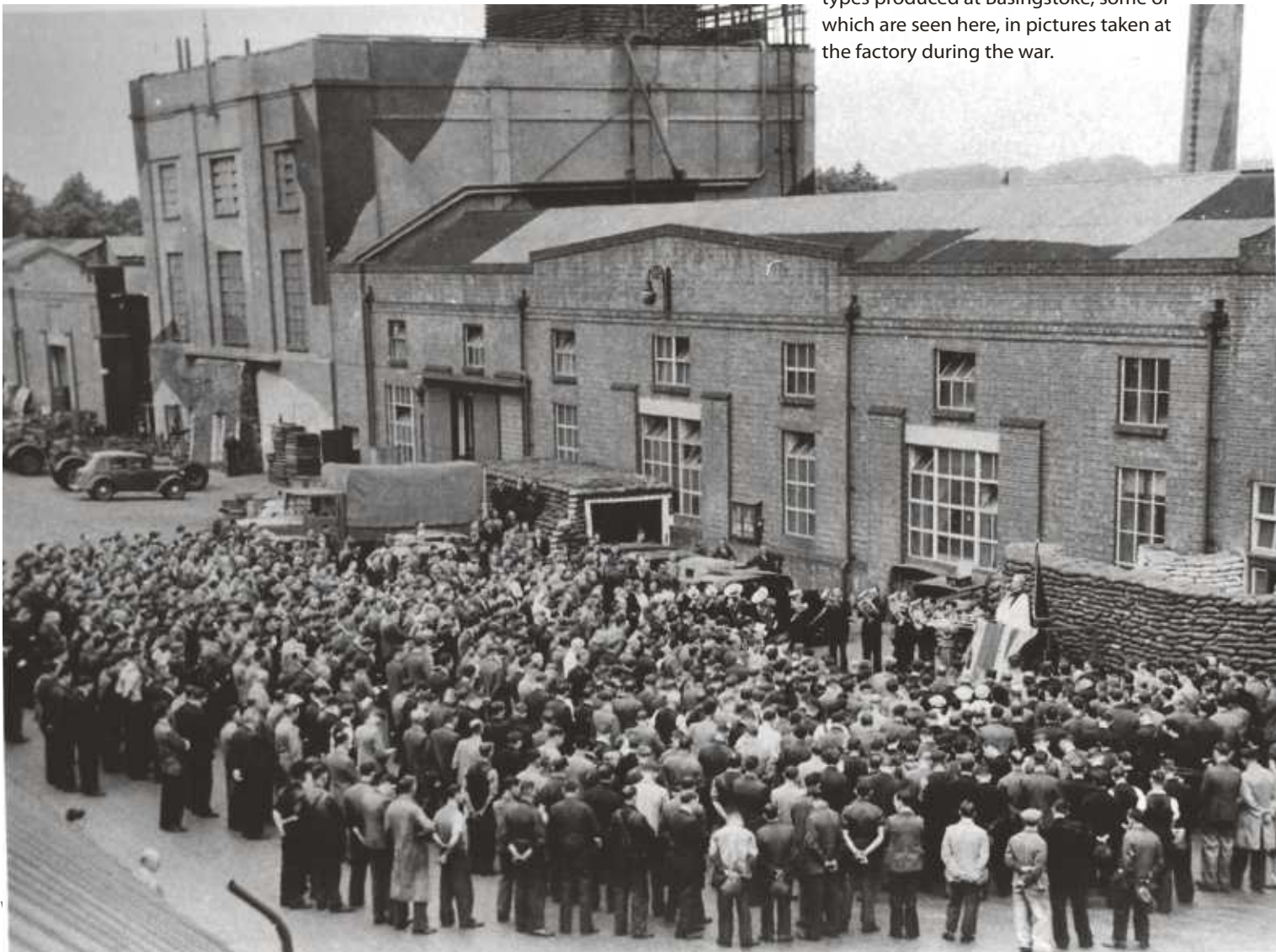


**Right:** 1939 – The Thornycroft Works notice board during the first months of the war with 'careless talk' and 'beware of spies' notices, seen on 19th October 1939.

**Below:** 1940 – Thornycroft Sturdy Type ZS/TC4 anti-aircraft searchlight vehicle. For independent operation of the searchlight, the dynamo was mounted under the bonnet, with the engine mounted further back in the cab.



**Below:** 1940 – On the National Day of Prayer, Sunday 23rd May 1940, an open air service in the Thornycroft Works yard was conducted by Canon Shute and attended by the management and 600 Sunday workers.



make impressive reading and it must be remembered that this was the output of Thornycroft's Basingstoke vehicle factory, which was in addition to the marine engines, motor torpedo boats and other vessels which were built at the company's Southampton shipyard.

I think everybody knows about the crane lorries based on the Thornycroft 'Amazon' chassis, which not only served the RAF well during the conflict, but went on to provide heavy lifting capability for many civil engineering and other companies, well into the post-war period. There were, however, many other vehicles of different types produced at Basingstoke, some of which are seen here, in pictures taken at the factory during the war.





Above: 1941 – Thornycroft Tartar Type WOF/DC4/Z, a traditional type army lorry. This diesel engine version was available from 1941. Thornycroft changed to direct injection during World War II. These vehicles were fitted with office, wireless and workshop bodies as well as the general service type seen here.

1940 – Just part of Thornycroft's significant contribution to the war effort during 1939-45, here a convoy of Bren Gun Carriers was being taken over by New Zealanders at the works entrance in 1940, out of a total of 8,230 of these vehicles built during the conflict, along with other vehicles, guns, depth charge throwers, flotation gear, torpedo rudders and other engineering products.



Above: 1940 – A goods train loaded with Bren Gun Carriers leaves the Thornycroft sidings. This is the section of the Alton Light Railway which linked the works with the LSWR main line to the West Country at Basingstoke Station.





Below: 1940 – Thornycroft Works gate house. The board acknowledges the collection for the starving troops returning from Dunkirk, as they passed through Basingstoke Station.

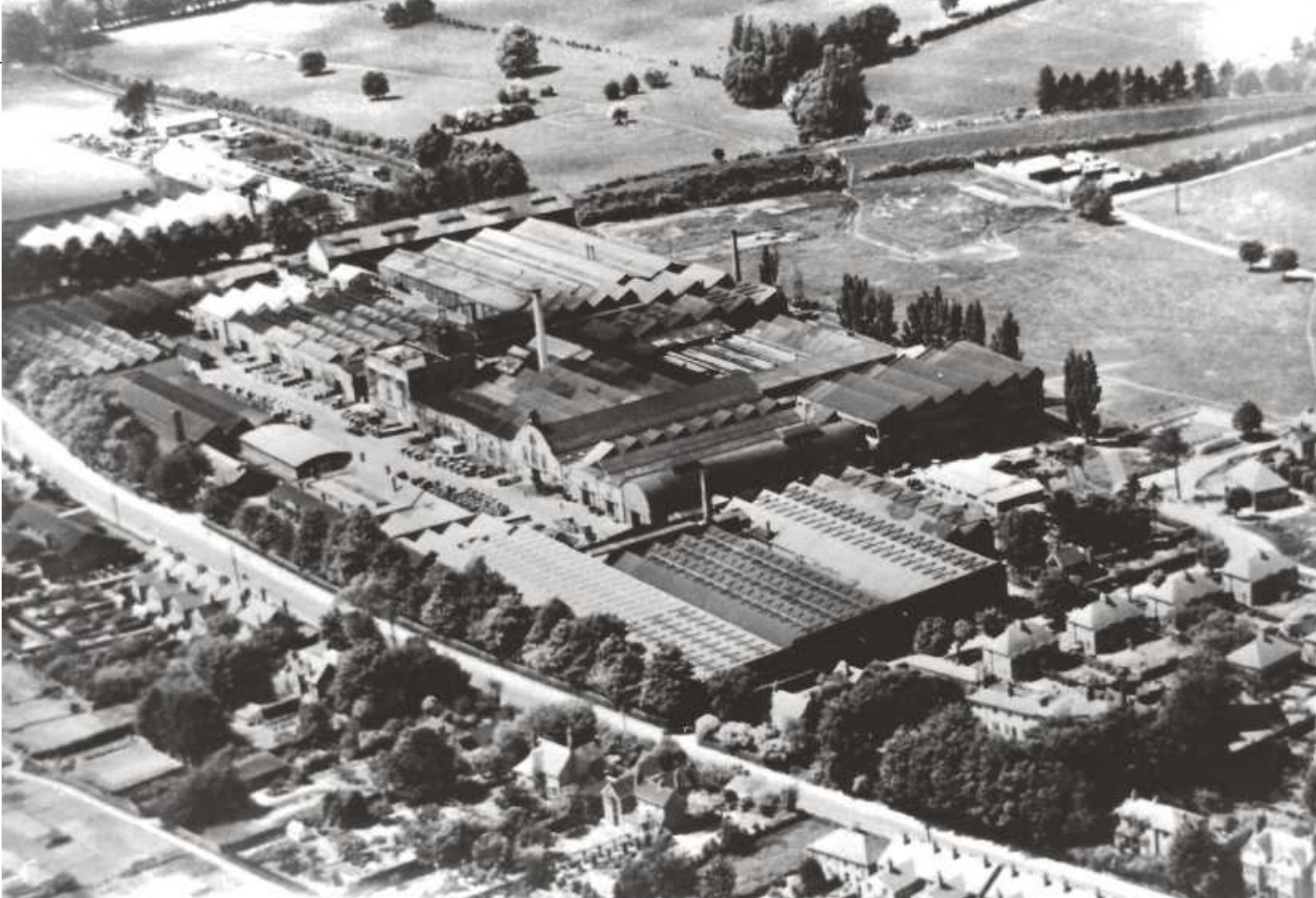






Above: The dreadful results of an incendiary bomb falling on the works during World War II. Nevertheless, one can imagine the further devastation, had the fuel tank in the foreground been hit. A V1 rocket also fell into a field nearby.





Above: An aerial view, taken in the late 1940s, which clearly shows the extent of the works.



Above left and right: 1946 – Among the many different vehicles, munitions and equipment delivered during World War II, perhaps the best-known are the many Amazon crane chassis, supplied to the RAF, as seen here being used to position a German V2 rocket in Trafalgar Square for an armaments exhibition in 1946.





**Above:** This Thornycroft Sturdy YE/TC4 was new around 1936, when this 4/5 ton model was first introduced. Lakemans of Fore Street in the fishing town of Brixham in Devon was established in 1780. Passing to new owners in 1901, the brewery was then sold again to N P Hunt, Cyder Merchants of Paignton in 1930. In turn this company sold the brewery to H & G Simmonds of Reading in 1937, along with 50 tied houses. Brewing ceased in the town in 1950, when the site was cleared for a new bus station. Hunts of Yalberton, Paignton, founded in 1805, still produce delicious Devon cyder.

# Those were the drays 3...

*Allan Bedford concludes his look at brewery drays from the days when the slogan 'beer is best' appeared on many vehicles, along with the delivery vehicles of some producers of cider and mineral water.*

Once a trip by road to the countryside or coast or for the annual holiday was a great way of spotting lorries and buses with wonderful liveries and fleet names associated with a particular area. Regrettably, many of these, including the local breweries, many of which survived for generations, have now vanished, along with their beers and their distinctive liveries.

Many quite large concerns still with us at the close of the 1950s had vanished or

been absorbed by 1970. Take-overs saw the creation of the 'big 6' giants who accounted for over 70% of beers sold by 1968. Local brews vanished and in their place came the dreaded keg ales.

During the same period many old cider makers closed their doors and many of the once numerous local mineral water firms called it a day, to be replaced by national brands of pop at your corner shop.

Thankfully with the formation CAMRA the tide slowly turned, with some of the

industry giants closing down and their weak offerings vanishing. To-day, the UK can boast over one thousand real ale and craft ale breweries and lively new cider producers offering tastes and choices as never before.

To remember some of the original local and regional names here is a small selection featuring an assortment of vehicles from our once numerous producers. Unfortunately being black and white the wonderful liveries of most remain a mystery.



**Above:** This pair of 2 ton Thornycroft Handy AE models were new in 1934. Again, a 'beer is best' poster is carried on one of the pair carrying attractive enclosed coachwork. The Portsmouth & Brighton 'United Brewery' from the Elm Brewery, Southsea was formed in 1928, with the take-over and elimination of the Rock Brewery in Brighton, thus creating a large geographical estate. Acquired by Brickwoods of Portsmouth in 1953, the brewery closed in 1962.





**Left:** Another popular vehicle in brewery fleets was the Dennis Max, first built in 1937. A local customer of Dennis Bros was the Friary Brewery in the centre of Guildford, which took delivery of its first Dennis Max in 1938, which was featured in an advert in 'Motor Transport' in June of that year. By 1946, with a re-styled cab, this example joined the Portsmouth & Brighton United Brewery of Southsea.

**Below:** The uniquely styled 'cabover' version of the 2 ton Thornycroft Handy, the model BE, was introduced in 1933. The LNER and GWR bought a total of 115 in early 1934, no doubt attracted by the vehicle's 36 ft turning circle. The small Thompson brewery in Walmer, Kent, purchased this example. The brewery could be traced back to the 1820s and used its trademark Lighthouse, known as the 'friendly light' in its advertising. The business was acquired by Charringtons in 1951 and brewing ceased shortly after.



**Left:** This 1932 30 cwt/2 ton Dennis from Charrington's Anchor Brewery in Mile End Road, London, E1, founded in 1770, carries posters for the 'beer is best' campaign, initiated by the Brewers Society in 1933. Charrington's merged with Bass and Mitchell and Butlers in 1967, to become Bass Charrington, with the Anchor Brewery closing in January 1975.



**Above:** A nice picture of a well-loaded 1935 Dennis 6 tonner and 'drag' at Hodgsons Kingston on Thames brewery. The brewery in Brook Street, with origins going back to the 16th Century, was acquired by William Hodgson in 1854. The business was acquired by Courage in 1943, after which brewing continued for a further six years, but the brewery was demolished in 1971.



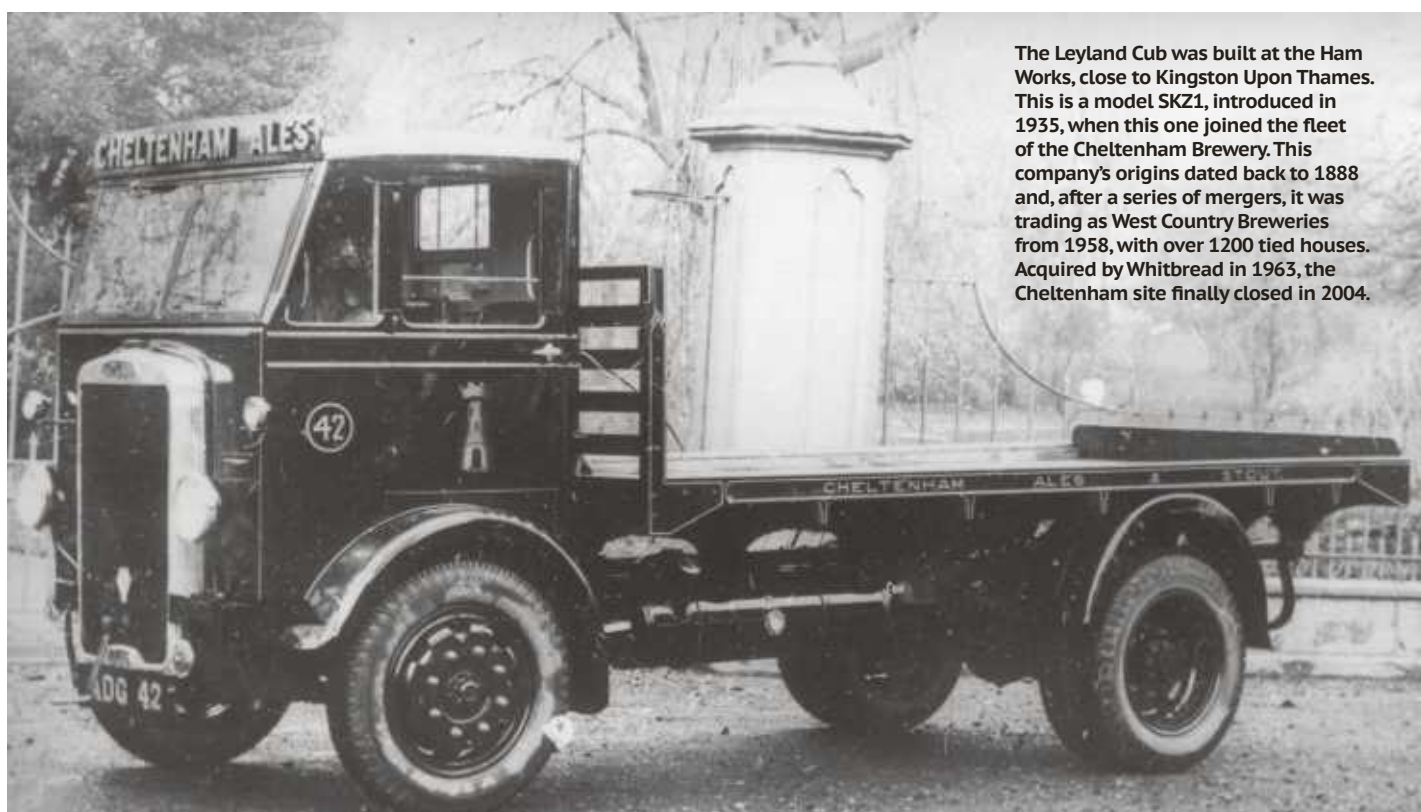
**Right:** Just before the merger with Ind Coope in 1934, Allsopp's Burton Brewery took delivery of these rare Armstrong Saurer four-wheelers, FA 5233-36. During a short production span, 1931-7, most of these Newcastle-built vehicles were multi-axle chassis. The smaller vehicles were offered with either a four or six cylinder Saurer diesel. Once again, the Brewery Society's 'beer is best' campaign is being promoted with posters on this quartet's bumpers.

**Below:** This Leyland carries a late 1928 registration issued in the brewery 'capital' of Burton on Trent. It looks as if it had received a replacement cab by the time of this World War II photograph, when the vehicle appears to have been running on producer gas. The lorry was probably new to Allsopp's High Street brewery, founded in 1740, which became Ind Coope and Allsopp in the 1934 merger with the Romford Brewery, with a combined total of 1800 pubs, becoming Britain's biggest brewer.



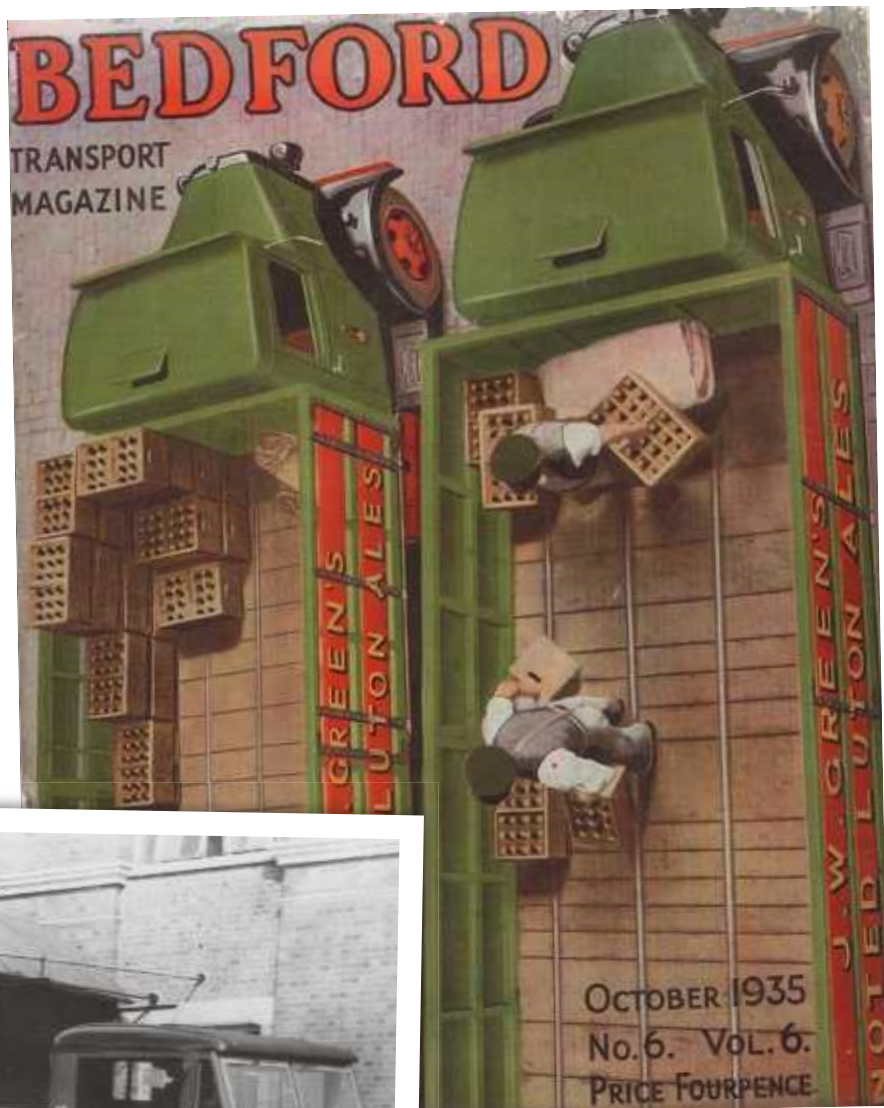
**Right:** This 1937 Albion Model 127 was possibly the last dray supplied to this Surrey brewer, based in Reigate High Street, in an area famed for its pale and bitter beers. Mellersh and Neale's trademark depicted a castle and sheaf of barley in a belt. The company's fleet in 1933 included a subsidy-pattern Thornycroft J Type, two mid-1920s bonneted Thornycrofts, an Albion over-type of 1930, plus a 1926/7 S & D Freighter on solids for local work. In 1934 came a pair of bonneted Morris Commercial C Types (CPA 479/480).

The brewery was acquired by Meux of London in 1938, along with 94 tied houses and ceased brewing. Since 1985, the castle trademark has been used on some of the labels of Pilgrim Ales, now brewed in the town.



The Leyland Cub was built at the Ham Works, close to Kingston Upon Thames. This is a model SKZ1, introduced in 1935, when this one joined the fleet of the Cheltenham Brewery. This company's origins dated back to 1888 and, after a series of mergers, it was trading as West Country Breweries from 1958, with over 1200 tied houses. Acquired by Whitbread in 1963, the Cheltenham site finally closed in 2004.





**Above:** This cover from the October 1935 Bedford Transport Magazine shows a lovely 'bird's eye view' of a pair of WTs, the colourful illustration even including the Bedford badge on the cab steps. J W Green of Luton was founded in 1869, at yet another Phoenix Brewery. In 1954, the company acquired Flowers Brewery in Stratford on Avon, the combination then trading as Flowers Brewery Ltd. Following sale to Whitbreads in 1961, both the Stratford and Luton breweries were replaced in 1969 by a mega-structure next to the M1 which, in turn, shut in 1984.



**Right:** The first brewery in the country to purchase the all-new ERF C1.4 was a very small concern located in Bexley Village, Kent. The Retell family from Redhill, Surrey, acquired the brewery in 1874. Following financial problems, the business passed to the Waistell family from 1904, until sale to Courage & Barclay in 1956, with just 19 tied houses. The brewery soon closed, although the premises in Bourne Road still survive as business units.

The vehicles were almost certainly supplied by W J Boyes of Peckham, the first London ERF distributor. Boyes was still selling 'B' and 'C' Series ERFs in the 1970s, from premises at Horndon-on-the-Hill near Orsett, Essex. The pair of C1.4s were chassis no 71, the ninth built, registered AK0 942, and no 75, registered AKP 499. No 71 was impressed for military service by the War Department, but No 75 survived into the post-war period. They carried an unusual pale blue and cream livery. The picture shows the pair emerging from the brewery in Bourne Road, Bexley.







**Above and right:** One of a number of stylish Maudslay Moguls supplied to 'Jenners' South London Brewery. This 1947 example became HXT 866 and featured coachwork by James Whitson of West Drayton, in Middlesex. The company also built many of the bodies fitted to the early post-war Maudslay Marathon coach chassis, including the 'one and a half deck' observation models, immortalised by Dinky Toys. Other Jenners examples included JXF 43, SML 534 and 535.

SML 535 was used to dramatic effect in the opening scenes of the famous 1950 film 'Blue Lamp'. The scene features a chase, with the police in a 1947 Humber Hawk, JKM 841, pursuing a now very desirable MG SA or WA Tourer. The crooks crash the car into a very convenient picket fence near an unfortunate drayman unloading barrels of Jenners Ale and, in the pursuit, he gets shot, falling on the pavement next to the unloaded barrels! The South London Brewery in Southwark Bridge Road was founded in 1760. After several changes of ownership, it closed in 1965. This however, was not the end of the Jenner Brewing dynasty, as the family is still involved in brewing wonderful beer in Lewes, East Sussex at Harveys.



**Above:** This was possibly a unique Scammell Scarab, supplied around the same time as those Whitson-coachbuilt Maudslays for Jenners. The Mechanical Horse Club has not been able offer any information. The dray body is the same shape as the Jenner Moguls. The cab looks as if it might also have been constructed by Whitson, only the roof profile complies with the standard factory cab from Scammell. (We will include more pictures of Jenners' Maudslays in a future brewery 'Scenes Past' – Ed)



**Right:** A stylish 1956 Portsmouth-registered Leyland Comet, probably carrying coachwork built in the town. Kemp Town Brewery, based in Seymour Street, Brighton, was by this time part of Charringtons. The brewery closed in the mid-1960s.



# Cider/Cyder

*A small selection from three of the country's prime cider/cyder producing counties.*



**Hereford:** a late 1947/early 1948 registered Maudslay Mogul of Wm Evans, which had an associate company in Devon, and became part of Webbs Brewery of Aberbeeg in 1946. When the Welsh brewer was acquired by the Sheffield-based Northern Breweries group in 1960, Evans was sold to Bulmers.



**Above:** An early Maudslay-badged AEC Mercury, from February 1955, in full Kentish Cyder livery, but carrying crates bearing the Barclay Perkins name. Following the merger with Courage, the cyder producer was disposed of and closed in 1964. I recall one of these Maudslay Mercury lorries in full Courage livery, delivering to the Dartford working mens club one lunchtime around 1971, when I worked in the town for J & E Hall.  
A new generation of Ashford Cyder producers, Beardspoon, now produce an Ashford Valley Tribute, using the old linked trademark on the bottle labels.



**Kent:** a wonderful advert featuring a Maudslay-badged AEC in an idillic Kentish setting complete with Oast Houses. Cyder production commenced in 1921, in the former Lion Brewery in Ashford, purchased by Style & Winch in 1912. In 1929, Style & Winch became a subsidiary of Barclay Perkins, but retained its identity and the link with Ashford Valley. The twin vehicle to this one, PKE 42, was in the main Style & Winch fleet.



### Devon:

an Austin-badged BMC 701, carrying a local Exeter registration, new in 1958, at the Weighbridge in Common Marsh Lane, Crediton. Cider production commenced at this site in 1935, and the company later became part of the City Brewery Group of Exeter. By the late 1950s, a large proportion of its production was sold in small earthenware gift jars, aimed at the enormous South West holiday trade. These small jars often turn up at Boot Fairs and Antique Shops, bearing the rustic image of 'Bill Brewer' and the slogan 'Greetings from Devon'. Following the sale of City Brewery to Whitbread in 1962, cider production closed at Crediton around 1965. However, this is another story with a happy ending, as Barney Butterfield from Sandford, Crediton, re-established cider-making in the town in 2001, with the launch of his Sandford Orchards Brand. With massive success in the market place and the huge increase in craft cider production, he was able to move into the original Creedy Valley buildings in late 2014, 50 years after production had ceased. The buildings and weighbridge seen in the picture still survive.



The same Creedy Valley Austin is seen dressed for a carnival, complete with a wonderful array of flagons and gift jars.

## Mineral Waters – a ‘Load of Codswallop’\*

\*Codswallop – origin of name – in mid-Victorian England, cheap beer was known as ‘wallop’. The first really successful mineral water bottle was developed in the 1870s by Hiram Codd – hence Codswallop. The Codd bottle is the one which contains a marble to act as the stopper.

**Right:** This early example of a Ford Model AA was new in 1929. Dornats of Barnstaple was founded by a Frenchman in 1860, on the site of the old workhouse. Some lovely old bottles can still be found bearing the embossed tree trademark shown on the door of the lorry. Dornats survived in business until 1980.







**Above:** A very neat Commer N1 25 cwt, posed when new in 1937, complete with a full load of crates, all stamped March 1937, with the maker's Diamond Trademark also visible. The crates are all stamped London and South Coast and, apart from the Fulham address shown, branches included Kingston, Bromley and Tunbridge Wells. The Direct Supply Aerated Water Co was still trading into the 1950s.



**Above:** An example of Dennis 'Light four tonner' a model which achieved total sales of just 436 units during its 4½ years in production. This one dates to early 1937 and carries an attractive green liveried shuttered coachwork for Kent's prominent family mineral water company. Founded in Maidstone in the 1870s, by the time of this photograph, Lyles had works and depots in Tunbridge Wells, Crayford, Strood and Maidstone. The business closed in the mid-1960s, with some of the customer base passing to Hooper Struve



**Above:** The Thames ET6/502E was a popular choice in the soft drinks industry. This late example from 1956 had bodywork by a Pile & Sons of Dartford. Hooper Struve was a very old concern; Frederick Struve arrived from Saxony in 1825 and established a spa in Brighton. He was joined by Mr Hooper in 1891. The trademark seen on the door featured a charming Georgian-dressed couple waltzing, with the royal warrant carried on the headboard, as suppliers to HM the Queen. The name lapsed into history after nearly 150 years, passing to R Whites.



**Above:** One of the Kent coast's more prominent concerns, based at Broadstairs, with depots at Herne Bay and Dover. A mixed fleet built in Luton and Birmingham from the late 1940s is seen in this view. The company had ceased trading by the mid-1960s. A Fremkins-liveried Sentinel steam waggon was seen outside the Dover depot in last month's issue.

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- Individuals Adrian Herbert, Slade Green, Kent; Barry Lucking, Gravesend, Kent.

# PUBLISH - AND BE DAMNED! MANUFACTURERS' HOUSE MAGAZINES

This month, **Malcolm Bates** digs out some personal favourite house magazines from his archive, including – surprisingly perhaps – one from what was once published by the nationalised behemoth that was the British Transport Commission.



Transport Age - 7

1: Cream of the Crop? 'Transport Age' was published by the British Transport Commission, from its headquarters in the old Great Central Hotel, next to Marylebone Station. We can view this as doubly ironic as, prior to 1923, the forward-thinking chairman of the Great Central Railway's ambition was as a commercially-run trans-Pennine, trans-English Channel rail network, routed via the Metropolitan and SE&CR, owning hotels, docks and road transport. After 1948, 'The Future' was seen as State-owned, centrally-managed and coordinated, with competition seen as wasteful of resources – and that was very much the subtext of 'Transport Age'. Readers are left in no doubt that 'rail' was the key transport medium – none of the thirty-or-so issues published actually feature long-distance road haulage on the front cover. The lorry is always in a supporting role to rail. Now? 'Nationalisation' (or any form of 'coordination') is seen as a dirty word and 'free enterprise' is once more seen as 'The Future'! Early front covers, as here, were always high-quality 'renderings' – in many cases by famous commercial artists' like Terence Cuneo – although this October 1958 cover illustration is by 'Neave'. It shows road-rail integration and co-ordination personified in the transfer of a new light alloy container from a road-going lorry (somewhere out of shot) onto a flat rail wagon by Shelvoke & Drewry 'Freightlifter' fork lift. Inside, we're told that the '8-ton' Freightlifter was 'very versatile' and that it 'could also be used as a mobile crane, thanks to a jib attachment'. The frontispiece caption doesn't tell us that British Railways was forced to specify a second cab for road travel between station goods yards, after a court ruled that driver's vision and rear-wheel steering may have contributed to a road accident. As a result, 'second generation' Freightlifters had a second cab and driver's controls to enable them to travel balance weight first on the road.



2: Inside Transport Age, we learn that Britain is still a world-class player in the production of steel and that British industry can actually make things – like ships – without the help of a single German, American or Chinese 'investor'. In fact, the BTC was itself busy commissioning a new fleet of ships – including three 'Duke-class' vessels for the Heysham Belfast ferry service and a new car ferry for the Dover-Boulogne service – all built in British shipyards. Meanwhile, in addition to steel, stressed concrete beams were also being used in the construction of some new road/rail bridges to facilitate the electrification of the Manchester-Crewe line – something planned to take two years using mostly direct labour, rather than the ten years of today's projected 'HS2', which would doubtless require a number of contractor 'partners'!



**F**or those readers who might think your editor, your's truly and the rest of the able team of contributors to 'Vintage Roadscene' work to some overall professionally-executed plan, I'm sorry to have to break the news. You're going to be disappointed. At least on the score of 'planning'. Because y'see, when it comes to formulating ideas for a single article – or in this case, a series of articles – what results, tends to happen by accident, luck, or a chain of events that just well... happen. (Lies, it's all the result of meticulous and exhaustive planning! – Ed)

Take the subject matter in question here – House Magazines. In the context of commercial vehicles, they've been around for ages. Indeed, a 'house magazine' in the form of a 1956 copy of 'The Leyland Journal' was the very first example of anything I ever collected as a young enthusiast. Sure, I'd already got cupboards full of diecast models, but the wonders within the pages of that single printed item opened my eyes to a wider world of 'real' lorries, beyond my then still limited personal experiences of trips up to London Docks, or down to Southampton in the school holidays, or what I saw locally.

It might well have been the case that – as with bus and train spotters – the initial manifestations of the 'collecting hobby' started with the idea of amassing as many photographs as possible of one's favourite makes. That was certainly



**Above:** The Nationalised Giant that was the BTC, didn't produce high quality potentially award-winning house journals from day one however – this is the second issue of 'British Road Services Magazine', published in June 1950 'for the staff' of BRS. Bizarrely, some bean counter in the BTC has deemed that it shouldn't go out free-of-charge to its eager readership, so it has a cover charge of three pence – that's three old pence of course. Remember the little eight-sided thru'penny bit? That's the fella.

The front cover shows a 'cheesy' posed photograph showing how the average working man, who once worked under the iron fist of a remote commercial railway company, or a tyrannical penny-pinching slave-driver of a private haulier, was clearly much happier when working in a State-owned enterprise. It was a great – and potentially highly desirable – vision, but the reality of constant political interference, poor management and lack of investment soon had 'the workers' complaining that 'new' nationalisation was worse than the 'old' privatisation. Here we see Albert Paton, the driver of a BRS AEC (almost certainly ordered before nationalisation) chatting to Jim Feasy, the driver of a British Railways steam loco. Which was best? Road or rail? The corporate message was 'a combination of the two' was likely to be the best.



**Above:** Inside BRS Magazine there was only one article about 'lorries' and a 'real' transport job – the overnight trunk from Wapload near Spalding, to Smithfield Market, Manchester, via Ashbourne and Leek – in this case by Charles Varley's AEC 'Matador'. The load of 690 boxes of daffodils being hand-balled onto – and off – an ordinary platform body!

true in my case and I still have hundreds of black and white photos purchased for a few pence each from various advertisers in the back of 'Trains Illustrated', 'Buses Illustrated', or the 'Meccano Magazine' of the period. But we need to remember that those collecting – or indeed

taking – photos of lorries back in the 1950s and early '60s were far fewer than those taking pictures of buses or railway subjects. So today, the lorry 'gene pool' is much smaller.

We also need to take into account that, unless you're really lucky, the actual details of the

vehicle in somebody else's photograph will almost certainly have been lost – unless they are original prints and have the details written on the reverse in pencil. For these reasons, the manufacturer's press photo is of double importance, as convention of the time had it that







copy that has lived through many decades of history. But what about the survival rate of Manufacturers' House Magazines? Many, like 'Ford Times' and Michelin's 'Tyre News' were of a distinctly 'throw-away' nature so, indeed, they soon were!

Some of the more glossy examples, such as 'The Leyland Journal' and 'AEC Gazette', have had a better survival rate, but you still see unwanted bundles on the floor underneath jumbler's tables at swapmeets. We all need to wake-up to the fact that, with no significant manufacturing industry left in the UK, it's highly unlikely we'll be seeing any new house magazines in future – in any case, they're a dying breed as these days, as it's all about websites. So any survivors are worth saving, surely?

It's also highly unlikely that we'll ever see a society in future where 'The State' sees it as part of its remit to actually own and manage a significant slice of our country's transport infrastructure – as was once the case. So on that basis, the beautifully-designed and produced 'Transport Age', published by the BTC, deserves a



Above and left: It's 1960 already, but Tyre News is still going strong. In this issue, we learn how well Guy was doing – don't get over-excited, sadly, it wasn't going to last – and how Wynn's shifted a 140 ton transformer from Devonport docks to Broadcyst, near Exeter, using an air-cushion system to reduce bridge loadings en-route. We also learn that Dyson was using Michelin 7.50-15 'X' tyres on the new low ramp-angle Model 820 low-loading trailer for Westminster Plant. Acclaimed journalist Bill Godwin reports from Kelvin Hall on the Scottish CV show, noting that 'Smiths for Service' had a Guy Big-J on display. Talking of Guy, that cover story reports that the company reached it's target of over 2000 chassis in a single year in 1968 and with the introduction of new 32 ton tractor unit, was looking forward to 'another record year'.

special mention. In an era where Britain's railway network has been fragmented and is 'franchised out' to an unholy alliance of foreign investors, bus operators and a bloke with a beard who made a pile of money out of... (just how did he make so much money, without ever actually making anything?) it's hard to understand how we got to here, from a vision of a national coordinated and integrated transport network. The concept



where someone in an office somewhere had the job of deciding whether a load of cement, steel or whatever was best sent by road, or rail, just doesn't seem 'modern' does it? But it was once seen as 'The Future'. That such a change has taken place within a single lifetime is easily forgotten until you delve into the pages of 'Transport Age'.

Even as recently as the late 1960s, the theories on transport integration and city planning by professor Colin Buchanan were very much seen as 'The Future' with rail – and my favourite, 'The Monorail' – playing an increasing part in shifting people around our overcrowded little island. The multi-franchised free-for-all we, er, 'enjoy'

**Right:** Throw away Society? 'Ford Express' was, it could be argued by non-Ford fans, much like the products of the company – cheap and not exactly designed to last. Printed on cheap newsprint in large broadsheet format, it was aimed at customers and potential customers of vans, commercial vehicles and passenger chassis, so it's unlikely many copies survive – unlike the more classy 'Ford Times', which was a 'proper' more corporate magazine, aimed primarily at car customers. This 1964 'Show Edition' issue does however feature colour printing and sets out the case that Ford now offers 'a wide range of modern commercial vehicles' – not something that could be said when the wheezing 100E and E83W side-valvers were part of the range and the 'Costcutter' was the heaviest lorry chassis available.

**Below:** Now featuring 'Anglia' 5-7cwt and 400E light commercials, the 'Clearway' integral parcel van and both forward and normal control 'Thames Traders' (the normal control models using a German-designed cab) – as well as Thames '30' and '36' passenger chassis – we find that many famous brands like Brooke Bond Tea, Brazils Pies and Sausages, Sketchley Cleaners, Segas and the Milk Marketing Board, were all ordering Fords in large numbers.







1



2

1: Within twelve months of the last issue of Ford Express, the image – and the fortunes – of the Ford Motor Company have been transformed. The big news is of course the introduction of the Ford Transit and almost the entire issue is devoted to this model in either passenger (minibus) or goods form. This included a witty item showing the 'Temperance Seven' – "a sort of beat combo, m'lord..." (actually, they were a light-hearted jazz band) all getting into a Tranny minibus. Although it's hardly likely all their instruments fitted in as well.

2: And finally - lorries on the front cover! Our Malcolm notes that it took until Issue 31 before a lorry was featured on the front cover of 'Transport Age' – although he has a couple of earlier issues missing, so there may have been others. It's December 1964 now and British Railways has introduced what was originally going to be called the 'Liner Train' concept - which after some swift marketing input, was changed to the 'Freightliner'. In addition to new 'Travelifts' designed to lift and shift containers, RailFreight has initially ordered some nice new Leyland tractor units with 'Four-in-Line' semi-trailers to enable the containers contents to be delivered to the customer's door. It's just a pity the old-fashioned cobbled yard and Victorian terraced housing in the photograph spoils the whole 'modern' image.

3: As if to underline the muddled thinking at British Railways (since the coordinated road/rail/waterways brief of the BTC was terminated, 'Transport Age' has now become an entirely 'rail' orientated publication), this issue also informs the reader of a second road-rail body transfer system – the 'Leapfrog' container system. This is, we're told primarily aimed at bulk liquid operations – although there seems no reason why it should be. 'Leapfrog' utilises not the overhead 'Travelift' but Lancer Boss sideloaders. The brief was to design a 4000 gallon capacity demountable tank, but this could only be loaded to 3600 gallons when filled with 'heavy fuel oil', as it put the four axle chassis like the Foden featured in the article over the maximum weight limit. Rather like the earlier 'Road-Railer' concept, this system looked very futuristic, but was soon overtaken by events, including faster motorway journey times and an increase in artic lorry maximum weights and, of course, Freightliner tank containers.

today, would have had the planners of the early postwar era – such as Abercrombie – confused to say the least. They would certainly have seen the notion of a southbound Eddie Stobart Scania passing a northbound Tyson H Burridge DAF on an overcrowded motorway as a wasted backload opportunity, but would have rightly pointed out that as neither had a load that was especially urgent, it would have made far more sense if both loads were transported by rail.

My point? 'Pictures' may be worth a thousand words, but the words to be found in House Magazines, unhindered by the constraints of editorial space and the need for a publisher to make a profit – as is the case of trade magazines – often give us the 'full picture' of the story behind the image within the social context of the time.

And that's why they're so special.



3



The Harris's trucks are certainly colourful, as displayed by this AEC Matador fitted with a Harvey Frost crane and modified rear bodywork.



# All The Fun of the Fair



*Ian Young takes a look at some of the ex-military vehicles used by Harris's Old Tyme Amusements.*

**H**arris's Old Tyme Amusements based in Ashington, West Sussex, has been around as a company since the 1860s. Born in 1833, John Harris, a timber merchant based in Cuckfield had five sons and first ventured into fairground amusements with their help, going on to be the first operators of steam powered roundabouts in the Sussex area.

John Harris died in 1901 and son Frederick left the remaining brothers, Chris, Moses, John and Edward, to take up the reigns and run the first set of gallopers, moving to Harris's Old Tyme Amusements' present home in Ashington, West Sussex on the 21st January 1902. Having purchased the remains of a Walker set of Gallopers from the Midlands company of showmen called Simons and Greatorex just before the outbreak of war



**Above:** The AEC Matador has long been a favourite with Ashington-based Harris's Old Tyme Amusements and here we see four of the fleet with a Scammell Explorer at the far end of the line up.





**Top left:** Fitted out to carry a Gardner 6LW-powered generator, this AEC Matador has been significantly modified from standard, with only the cab remaining basically the same as the military version it is based on.

**Top right:** The 1951 Scammell Explorer was given the nickname of 'The Animal'; probably because of the Scammell's legendary pulling power and off-road prowess.

**Right:** The movement of the amusements and caravans whilst on site can be difficult depending on the ground conditions and as a consequence many of the trucks are fitted with front and rear towing pintles.

**Below:** In this group of Matadors, the centre vehicle is fitted with a rear-mounted HIAB crane and mounts a 4LW generator on the flat bed. Note also the different cab and multi-point towing pintle at the front.





in 1914, the nucleus of the new fairground business was formed, but few knew that it would still be running as a going concern over 100 years later.

Over the next hundred years, the family generations have continued to run and expand the business, running the fair in the summer months, falling back on the original timber business in the winter months to keep them ticking over until the following season, but at the same time allowing valuable time to maintain and repair the rides in preparation for the next season. In that time, only two wars and a foot and mouth outbreak have halted the activities of Harris's Old Tyme Amusements



**Above:** AEC Matador WPX 925F is fitted with a replacement cab and a rear-mounted HIAB crane, not to mention a 4LW generator.

**Left:** Seen here at the War & Peace Show in Kent, the livery on this 'Harris's Road Train' Scammell Explorer is a far cry from the drab military green paint it once wore whilst in military service!

**Below:** Scammell replaced the wartime Pioneer and with the Explorer and with it introduced a 6x6 drivetrain, offering better off-road performance and an ideal candidate for a heavy-duty recovery truck.



and, at present, the fair is run by the five Harris brothers, Fred, John, Ted, Doug and Robert, together with their wives, families and friends, who are a familiar sight in the south.

## Motive Power

The fairground attractions and all the attendant equipment were originally pulled by horses, which was the normal mode of transport at the time, but the advent of steam-powered vehicles saw a move towards these. Keen to keep up with modern technology,







It's difficult to miss the Harris trucks with their distinctive yellow, red and maroon livery and traditional sign writing.

For comparison, here is a standard wartime AEC Matador 4x4, showing just how much modification the Harris trucks have received.

Harris's operates some of the finest examples of vintage rides in the country, with the company's famous Gallopers dating from the late 19th Century.

The old and the not so old – a Garrett showman's engine stands alongside an example of the AEC Matador truck, which largely replaced the steam engines in the post-war years.



the company invested in a number of steam engines, including Burrells, Fowlers, Garretts and a Fowler.

The steam-powered vehicles soldiered on until 1946, but the release of many thousands of cheap surplus military vehicles by the Army in the post-war years saw the steam engines being replaced by a range of AEC Matadors, Scammells and FWD SU COE trucks, some of which are featured here, which continue to serve more than 70 years on.

More recent ex-military vehicles such as the AEC Militant have also been taken on strength, in what is now a very large fleet of vehicles run by Harris's. They perform mundane tasks such as towing the many trailers containing the different rides, and carrying heavy generators

to run the rides and thousands of colourful lights that adorn the rides. As well as these day-to-day jobs, some of the vehicles carry recovery equipment capable of pulling the trucks and trailers off muddy fields when the need arises or simply tow them home if they break down.

### Personal Passion

Over the past decade or more, I've had a passion for fairground trucks and I've encountered the colourful trucks belonging to Harris's Old Tyme Amusements on several occasions at a variety of events, including the War & Peace Show, when it was held at the Hop Farm in Beltring, Kent. Needless to say it was the ex-military vehicles that caught my

attention more than the traditional fairground rides and, armed with camera, I snapped away to record them for posterity.

After spending many years hidden away in the depths of my ridiculously large photograph collection, I finally dug out the prints to put together this feature, which I'm hoping will appeal to several groups of readers, from those who like traditional fairgrounds and the vehicles used in connection with them, to those who simply like ex-military vehicles.

Today Harris's Old Tyme Amusements continues to tour the south of the country with its fabulous selection of traditional fairground rides, but the company also maintains a website to keep you informed of the latest news: [www.harrisfunfair.co.uk](http://www.harrisfunfair.co.uk)



# IT'S ALL AT THE CO-OP

## - BURSLEM & DISTRICT INDUSTRIAL CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY

This month, **Mike Forbes** has selected a series of pictures of vehicles taken on a visit to a local Co-operative Society, showing a wide range of vehicles and their uses.

"It's all at the Co-op – now!" the advert used to go. Once upon a time, this really was true. "From the cradle to the grave," could have been another, possibly less attractive-sounding catchphrase. I expect a lot of readers will remember their local Co-operative Society's vehicles from their youth, as I do. A wide range of different types and often makes, working for many different departments.

As well as the grocery shops, the Co-op ran bakeries, dairies, coal merchants, funeral services and many other functions, not to mention its own maintenance departments, so the fleets included all sorts of different vehicles. We have more coming, in due course, on other areas of the Co-operative Societies, and CWS, the Co-operative Wholesale Society, which ran factories and long distance delivery vehicles, but for now, let's concentrate on the Burslem branch.

Burslem is one of the six towns in the Potteries district, making up what we know as Stoke-on-Trent. The Co-operative movement grew through the 19th and 20th centuries, with customers encouraged by a form of joint ownership, whereby their purchases earned a small 'dividend' at the end of the financial year. The Burslem Co-op

**Above right:** The newest vehicle in this series of pictures dates from 1947, according to its registration, so it is no surprise to find plenty of pre-war vehicles still in use by the Burslem & District Industrial Co-operative Society, to give its full name. Here we have two Bedford vans, a WH 2-tonner, DVT 744 (Stoke-on-Trent, 1936) and a WS 30cwt, CEH 962 (Stoke-on-Trent, 1935), loading at what appears to be a central grocery warehouse. The customers appear to have been a clean lot, as there are stacks of cartons of 'Tower Brand' bleach on the loading bank. (CHC aax543)

**Right:** Another Bedford WS van, with a different style of body, with sliding side doors, lettered for the Butchery Department. CEH 769, like all the Burslem Co-op vehicles carrying a Stoke-on-Trent registration, this one from 1935, looks as if it is standing in the yard of the society's headquarters. (CHC aax544)







was particularly strong and successful for many years, with local people benefitting in many ways.

It developed from a single Burslem bread shop into a production and retail industry that affected the lives of possibly every family in the region. It has been said: "Whether you celebrated your birth or wedding at Co-op restaurants, or were buried from a Co-op chapel of repose; whether you wore clothes tailored by the Co-op, rode Co-op bicycles, drank Co-op milk or went on a Co-op holiday, life-long interaction with the Co-op throughout the 20th century was inevitable from cradle to grave." What is more, it seems that the

**Right:** Another Bedford WHG 2-tonner, FVT 397, dating from 1938, seen being loaded in the coal yard. The 'coalmen' appear to be filling sacks by hand from the heap. The Bedford, with its coachbuilt cab, with 'Burn Co-op Coal' above the single screen, seems to have suffered somewhat, with its battered wings and missing headlight. (CHC aax545)





Co-operative Group, as it now seems to be known, is still going strong.

Burslem Co-op is typical of many local societies around the country. There might have been differences in the liveries used by other local branches – as I recall from my youth, the Lowestoft Co-op livery was basically red, while Norwich, for example, was green and cream, and so on (I'm talking pre-corporate blue and white of the late 1960s onwards) – as well as the types of vehicle, but for us it can be taken as representative – as it was, presumably, for Commercial Motor when it visited in the early post-war years. I hope you enjoy the pictures, even if some of the original glass-plate negatives have suffered from damp, so they will not reproduce as well as we'd like. Unfortunately, even if you can remember your mum's number, there's no 'Divi' to be earned here...



Above: Another view in the coal yard, with this time a Bedford WT, with its shorter bonnet, but still a coachbuilt cab, being loaded alongside what might have been a Fordson 7V of another operator. (CHC aax527)



Above: Are we still in the coal yard, or is this a heap of builders' spoil being unloaded by the Bedford OWST tipper? We have seen JEH 945 from 1942 before, with its single headlight and battered wing. Burslem Co-op obviously worked its vehicles hard, as this one would not have been much more than five years old when the picture was taken. (CHC aax542)

Right: Contrasting with some of the other vehicles, this must have been among the oldest Bedfords in the Burslem Co-op fleet at the time, but in excellent condition. The earlier style of Bedford WS, with dropside body, BVT 788, dating from 1935, was being attended to in the society's garage. (CHC aax540)







**Above:** What's he doing? He's re-grooving a worn tyre. Those were the days... (CHC aax523)



**Left:** Alongside the WS dropside in the garage was fleet no 61, a Bedford HC 5-6 cwt van, introduced in 1939, based on the four cylinder H Type car, having some serious remedial work done on the front end. (CHC aax536)

**Below left:** Tyre fitters now have various pneumatic tools to fit tyres onto rims, but the basic job hasn't changed so much. (CHC aax535)



**Below:** A mechanic attends to the 'big ends' on a six cylinder engine. At one time, most commercial vehicle operators ran their own workshops, undertaking quite extensive repairs and rebuilds. (CHC aax547)





**Right:** Fleet no 70 was a Bedford K Type van, here having some signwriting added to the cab door. The wheels, wings and petrol tank look as if they've been re-painted black as well. (CHC aax524)



**Left:** The Burslem Co-op obviously built its own bodywork as well. Here the framework of the floor of an integral van body is being put together on what looks like a new Bedford 'M' Type chassis-cowl, although that's a 1942 Hampshire registration, EHO 169, which somebody has marked with a finger in the dirt on the number-plate. Did the society perhaps undertake work for other Co-op branches, or occasionally use a second-hand vehicle? (CHC aax538)

**Right:** "Have you checked your petrol and oil?" and "We shall be pleased to serve you" says the sign. At a guess, this is the transport manager's Vauxhall H Type saloon, being filled from the society's pump at its headquarters. (CHC aax526)

**Below left:** An exception to the seemingly all-Bedford fleet of Burslem Co-op was this Albion van, AVT 806, from 1934, with fruit or vegetable crates in the background. (CHC aax541)

**Below right:** Another interloper was this 'Birmingham Bedford', an Austin K2, JVT 283, dating from 1945, no doubt added to the fleet when vehicles of any type were difficult to obtain. The van body was fitted out with racks to take the trays of bakery products. That looks like the two Bedford vans in the first picture in the background. (CHC aax525)







**Above and left:** Front and rear views of LEH 457, a Morrison Electric baker's van, dating from 1947, so one of the newest vehicles in this series of pictures, with the delivery man, smartly attired with dust-coat and cap, taking loaves in a basket to private houses. (CHC aax528/533)

**Below:** This Bedford WS van is also being loaded with trays, this time of loaves of bread, brought to the loading bank on a sort of roll-pallet. Handling systems seem to have taken a long time to develop but, of course, labour was cheaper and more plentiful at one time... (CHC aax537)







**Above:** Another Bedford WS, this time with a Luton van body, of the Drapery & Furniture Department, being loaded outside the Furniture and Hardware shop. This size of vehicle would have been used for deliveries, rather than removals. There is a notice referring to 'grey, red or yellow units', coupons for the early post-war rationing of 'Utility' furniture, like the wardrobe being loaded – comparatively basic, but still quite stylish and excellent quality. (CHC aax529)



**Left:** A Bedford HC van, like the one in the workshops, KEH 30 of 1946, being used to deliver a stylish radio set – the last word in home entertainment in those days. (CHC aax530)



**Right:** Another Bedford HC van, LVT 520, from 1947, its open rear doors showing the wooden-framed, metal-panelled coachwork of those days. (CHC aax546)



**Left:** A Bedford OL dropside, KVT 888 from 1946, rather lightly loaded with cardboard boxes, including some marked Kellogg's and Welgar 'Shredded Wheat', so no doubt a grocery delivery (on a dropside, wouldn't be allowed these days...). I would hazard a guess that the Buslem Co-op vehicles were painted red – can somebody with local knowledge confirm that? (CHC aax531)

**Below:** 'Cradle to grave' has always meant just that with the Co-op. Here an urn is being loaded into a Bedford BYC panel van from the mid to late-1930s, lettered for the funeral and monumental service. (CHC aax532)



**Below:** To show the range of vehicles the Burslem Co-op was using, here are three hearses, including a Rolls-Royce, and limousines of the funeral department. The cars, including a 1938 Vauxhall Grosvenor limousine, EVT 830, plus three 1936-38 Hillman 80 saloons and a 1932-34 Austin 16 or 18 (thanks to Nick Georgano for confirmation of identification), would also have been used as chauffeur-driven hire cars for weddings and other special occasions. (CHC aax539)





# A Century of Southdown Motor Services

## 1915-2015 – Part 2



One of the bodybuilders on the batch of wartime Utility Guys was Weymann, which built this H30/26R-bodied Arab II/5LW, GUF 393, which served until 1956, when it went to the Llandudno & Colwyn Bay Electric Railway Company and on to dealer Colbro by 1960.

*In a series of articles, **Malcolm Wright** presents a brief history of this much-loved Sussex operator and its varied fleet over the years, with 100 representative photographs.*

**S**outhdown Motor Services Ltd was created 100 years ago, when what would become the BET Group, based on the British Automobile Traction and British Electric Traction companies, consolidated its position on the South Coast around Brighton, by bringing the services of a number of different companies together.

Southdown's coverage was gradually extended across Sussex and beyond, with coach services to and from London and tours becoming an important part of its operations. Agreements with Tilling company, Brighton, Hove & District, and Brighton and Eastbourne Corporations – in the days when such practical ways of working together were allowed – carried on until the formation of the National Bus Company swallowed the Tilling and BET operators, the council-run services also becoming parts of the current big groups following deregulation.

Perhaps it is because of the attractive apple



**Above:** Along with the 1946 batch of Guy Arabs, a number of Leyland PD1s were fitted with Park Royal bodies. GUF 676 was typical of the batch, which served until 1963, passing north to dealer F Cowley of Salford and on to Manchester Corporation Direct Works Department, for use as a mobile canteen or office.

green and cream livery of Southdown's vehicles – always interesting because of the significant exceptions to the mainly Leyland fleet – or because of the connection in so many peoples' minds with holidays in the country or at the seaside, but Southdown has always had a particular following among enthusiasts from far and wide.

So, as the milestone of 100 years is passed this year, with rallies and other commemorations from the company's successors, we continue our look back with 100 photographs. Last month, we reached the Utility Guy Arabs of World War II, so we carry on here with early post-war vehicles...



**Above:** This 1947 Leyland PS1/1, GUF 742, with a C31R ECW body was renumbered from 1242 to 694 in 1957, serving for a further four years before going to that Salford dealer.



**Left:** Also new to the fleet in 1947 was this handsome Harrington-bodied Leyland PS1. It accommodated 32 people in its coach body. It had a full width canopy and ran with Southdown until 1958, before passing to F Cowley, and to Williams of Treorchy by 1959 and out of service with them by 1966.

**Below:** A year later, this Leyland PS1, HUF 307, arrived at Southdown, bodied by Park Royal. Serving until 1959, it was sold through F Cowley to contractors, Wimpey of London as its fleet no 118, which can be seen just in front of the driver door. It is seen here in 1962, prior to going to General Auctions of London.







**Above:** A double-decker new in 1948 was JCD 39, a Leyland PD2/1 with Leyland H28/26R bodywork. Numbered 339 in the fleet, it served until 1964, when it was purchased by Mexborough & Swinton of Rawmarsh as its number 20. It was reduced to driver training duties as from the end of 1967, re-numbered 39, then on to dealer Johnson of Goldthorpe for scrap.



**Above:** An unusual purchase in 1949 was JUF 82, a Dennis Falcon with Dennis B30R bodywork, a lightweight vehicle for use on Hayling Island services, where it spent the whole of its working life, along with nine similar vehicles. This particular bus was exhibited at the 1948 Commercial Motor Show. It was withdrawn by 1958, passing to Brighton Corporation Welfare Department, where it served for six years before being sold for scrap. (Surfleet Transport Photographs).



**Above:** As an introduction to the 1950s Sussex scene, here we see a selection of buses of the time at the Pool Valley bus station in Brighton; CCD 945, a 1936 Leyland; OUF 517, a 1955 Guy Arab IV 6LW; GUF 124, a Guy Arab II dating from 1944; and KUF 701, a Leyland PD2, dating from 1951.



**Above:** This Leyland Royal Tiger PSU1/15 with Duple C26C coachwork, LCD 208, came into the fleet in 1951. It was fleet no 808, then 1808 from 1955 until withdrawal in 1966. It passed once again to dealer F Cowley, and was resold to St Kevins Bus Service of Roundwood the next year and finally to Kinsella in Dublin by 1969.



**Above:** The following year came LUF 618, a Duple-bodied C41C Leyland PSU1/15 coach. This served until 1965, when it went to Cowley at Salford and thence to Office Cleaning of Urmston, Manchester and finally to Barraclough, another dealer in Barnsley by 1970 for scrap.



**Above:** LUF 637 was a 1952 Leyland PSU1/15 with Leyland C41C bodywork. It served until 1963, when it moved for a further four years with Mexborough & Swinton of Rawmarsh, before passing to F Cowley.



**Above:** Another Leyland PSU1/15 new in 1952 was LUF 813, but this vehicle had Harrington C26C luxury coachwork ready for 'The Grand Tour of Britain'. Re-numbered from 813 to 1813 in 1955, then again to 1673, it remained in the Southdown Fleet until 1966. It then passed through dealer Cowley to Wimpey and on to another contractor, McAlpine by 1971.



**Above:** What happened to EUF 183, after it reached its final resting place, at dealer Light of Lewes.



**Above:** This handsome Duple-bodied 41 seat coach appears to be very solidly-built. It was new in 1953 on a Leyland Royal Tiger PSU1/15 chassis. It had only small Southdown logos on the side trim panel and at the lower front. A sister vehicle was exhibited on the Duple Stand at the 1952 Commercial Motor Show. This coach served until 1965, when it passed through Cowley to Rhymney Transport, where it worked for another three years.





Left: 1: MUF 431 was one of a pair of Harrington-bodied 26 seat coaches, which were also new in 1953. It was on a Leyland PSU1/16 chassis. These two vehicles were re-seated to C41C in 1961. Sister vehicle 430 was transferred to Coras Iompair Eireann for exclusive use on Southdown's Eire tours from during summer 1953, then both were loaned to Aldershot & District during 1966. They were withdrawn the following year, sold to Rhondda Transport and later in the year via dealers to Wimpey and finally to dealer Cowley by 1971.

2: MCD 511 was a 1953 purchase and was a Leyland PSU1/13, with East Lincs B40C bodywork. It was converted to B41F for 'omo' in 1959, serving until 1967, then passing to F Cowley of Salford. It then became a non-psv with Hubron Rubber Chemicals of Failsworth, until withdrawn around 1971.

3: In 1954, this Duple (Nudd)-bodied Leyland PSUC1/1 B39F seat bus was delivered. Duple acquired Nudd Brothers & Lockyer Ltd, based in Kegworth and used its former premises to make metal-framed bodied from the Duple standard range. This bus served in the Southdown fleet until 1968, when it passed via Cowley to John Dengate of Beckley. It was then seen at a scrapyard at Bethersden in 1973, but then moved north to Manchester Corporation's Direct Works as a non-psv. (Surfleet Transport Photos)

4: This 1955 Leyland PD2/12 with Park Royal H31/26RD bodywork is once more back in Sussex green livery. It worked for Southdown until 1970 in passenger service, then was adapted for learner driver duties and re-numbered as T772. Alongside is 42 ATO, a former Nottingham Transport Leyland PD2 with MCW bodywork.

5: Its driver trainer duties finished, OCD 772 was preserved, here showing the work awaiting its restorer.

6: Guys appeared once more in Southdown's fleet in 1955, this time the Arab IV 6LW version. Fleet no 521 had a Park Royal H31/26RD body and served until 1968. It then passed north to Cowley and by October of that year on to Simonds of Botesdale, Suffolk, in whose livery it can be seen in this view, along with a small Bedford of Theobald of Long Melford.

7: In 1956, RUF 47 joined the Southdown fleet as no 1047. It was a Beadle C41C vehicle on a Leyland PSU1/2 chassis. Withdrawn in 1967, it followed others to Cowley and on to contractor Wimpey. After a spell carrying workmen, it returned to Cowley and was re-sold to a scrapyard at Carlton, Barnsley in 1971.

8: Also new in 1956 was RUF 187, another Beadle bodied bus to H33/26R configuration. It was built on a Leyland PD2/12 chassis and served until 1970, when it travelled north via Cowley to The British Shoe Corporation at Leicester as a non-psv.



Above: This 1956 Guy Arab IV 6LW bus with Park Royal H33/26RD bodywork had quite a high passenger capacity. Serving until 1969, it passed again to that Salford dealer and on to Kirby of Bushey Heath, where it worked for a further three years. Sister bus 639 went abroad to work with the China Bus Co in Hong Kong, along with others from the batch.



Above: A fine looking vehicle was RUF 205, a 1957 Leyland PD2/12, with East Lincs H33/26RD bodywork. Numbered 805 in the fleet, it served with Southdown until 1971. After resale by Cowley it worked for Kenzie of Shepreth, Boons of Boreham, Gilbert & Turner of Stanford-le-Hope and finally Avro at Corringham by 1974. Seen here at a rally, it has been preserved by Robbins of Leatherhead.



Above: In 1959, Leyland PD3/4 VUF 841 with NCME full-fronted FH39/30F bodywork joined Southdown The 'Queen Mary' bus worked until 1972, when it passed through Cowley to the China Motor Bus Co of Hong Kong, as its AH4199 the following year.





**Above:** An unusual purchase was a small batch of 15 Commer Avenger IV chassis, with local bodybuilder Harrington providing the C35C coachwork. It was withdrawn by 1971, when it was sold to Cowley of Salford.



**Above:** This 1962 Leyland L2, 8742 CD, with Harrington C28F bodywork, served until 1972, passing to Tilling Travel (NBC) Ltd of Chelmsford as its no 9709. It was repainted into white National coach livery and went on loan to Grey Green. It was transferred to National Travel (SE) Ltd in 1974.



**Above:** This Leyland PD3/4 with NCME bodywork to FC039/30F configuration, 402 DCD, was new in 1964 as a convertible open-top, by removing the roof and replacing with hand rails and Perspex screens. Some others from this batch have been preserved.



**Above:** A close-up shot of 409 DCD at the North Weald Rally in the 1980s. It is now preserved by Southdown (WS) 19909.



**Above:** BUF 280C was a 1965 Leyland PD3/4 with NCME FH39/30F bodywork.



**Above:** VUF 929 was a rare Burlingham C35C body on a Commer Avenger 1V chassis. It served with Southdown from 1959 to 1967. After disposal to F Cowley, it went to another dealer, Huntley Brothers of Carlton, Barnsley by 1972.



**Above:** SUF 896 was a 1957 Beadle-bodied C41C coach, on a Leyland PSU1/2 chassis, which served until 1969, then on to an Irish contractor by 1971.



**Above:** EUF 199D was a 1966 Leyland PSU3/3RT with Plaxton C49F bodywork. After withdrawal by Southdown, it worked for Hills of Tredegar from 1982.



**Above:** A front three-quarters view of a 1953 Leyland/Beadle FC26F coach, now safely preserved by Gray of Funtley. This batch was built by J C Beadle, using Leyland TS8 running units. This bus was converted to B31F in 1958, when it was re-numbered to 649. It was withdrawn by 1965, initially going to F Cowley, then to Howard Clayton-Wright of Wellesbourne in 1968 as a non-psv, to 1st Woodmansterne Scout Group of Banstead by 1969 and to Oliver, Chichester in 1971 for preservation.



**Above:** MCD 537 was a Leyland PSU1/13 with East Lancs B40C bodywork, clearly showing the entrance door towards the rear of the vehicle. Converted to B39F and omo in 1961, it worked until 1968, when it went to F Cowley of Salford.



**Above:** LUF 619 was a 1952 Leyland PSU1/15 with Duple C41C coach bodywork. It was soon converted to C32C as part of a batch of vehicles loaned to Global Tours of London. While it was on loan, fleet no 1619 was badly damaged in an accident, so its body was scrapped and a replacement Duple C41C body was fitted in 1953. It served with Southdown until 1965.



**Above:** HCD 856 was a 1947 Leyland PS1/1 with Park Royal C32R bodywork, seen here with Otterburn Coaches in Newcastle Upon Tyne, after having been withdrawn and sold to Cowley in 1958.



**Above:** New in 1955, fleet no 832, a Leyland PSU1/16 with Harrington C26C bodywork, was transferred to Ulster Transport Authority in May 1955, for exclusive use on Southdown's Tours in Northern Ireland. It returned to the main fleet by 1963 and was painted in the blue livery of Buck's Coaches of Worthing. It was withdrawn from service by 1966, when it passed through that Salford dealer to contractors Wimpey of London.

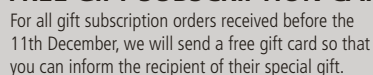


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# MERRY CHRISTMAS

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# TAKING THE BISCUIT



*Ron Waghone has sent us a whole series of pictures from the days when he helped ensure that our Cream Crackers were delivered to the shops.*

thoroughly enjoyed the article on 'Swap Body' vehicles in the recent issues of Vintage Roadscene. When I worked for Associated Biscuits (ABL), as a vehicle fitter at the company's Belvedere Depot, we changed to swap bodies in 1975. From a fitter's point of view, these they were great, as we had Bedford TKs in the fleet and when they were in for service or repair, we had so much more access without a body on.

The other factor was that if a vehicle broke down on route, we used to go out with another unit and change over the body at the side of the road (including motorways) in



order that the driver could continue with his deliveries. There's another thing that Health & Safety would have stopped now.

The system that we had was the Ablematic Air Bellows type. The front end was raised first and then the rear. Once lowered onto the chassis, the body was secured by four twist locks. The vehicles had to have a bigger output air compressor fitted to compensate for this type of system and had a large air cylinder fitted on the side of the chassis.

We had a yard shunter vehicle to

manoeuvre the bodies around the depot for loading and this was an old TK with a hydraulic lift platform. This used to pick up the complete body as it stood and just took the body to the loading area and later to the parking area ready for the next day's delivery.

I have numerous memories of the time we had these and most are funny, and fortunately we never had any major accidents. I hope that the attached photos will be of use. The final one is of one of our Leyland Boxers with the body on and also in our new Nabisco Group livery.



The next series of photos were taken by the late Mike Roberts, his wife having given permission for their publication. They were taken in our Liverpool and Earlstown depots. We were originally Associated Biscuits Ltd, before being taken over by Nabisco. Mike worked for the company as a painter and body repairer. You will note that there was a restored Foden in the collection, on which he did a lot of the work, 4248 KF. There were also replica vans, which were specially manufactured in the 1980s for companies, for use mainly as promotional vehicles.







There are also some photos of the company's vehicles at the Belvedere depot, where I worked as an HGV fitter, from an earlier era. Some of these are stills from old 8mm film that I took at the W&R Jacobs biscuit depot in Belvedere, when I was an apprentice HGV fitter, around 1965. In the shots are my late father, Bill, with his back to the camera. The fitter who was my mentor is alongside the TK with the cloth cap on, Len Reynolds. The other TK is BLV 554B and driver Terry Hebden is seen alighting from his Albion Claymore. There is also a view of the front entrance to the depot and a couple of Albion Claymores.

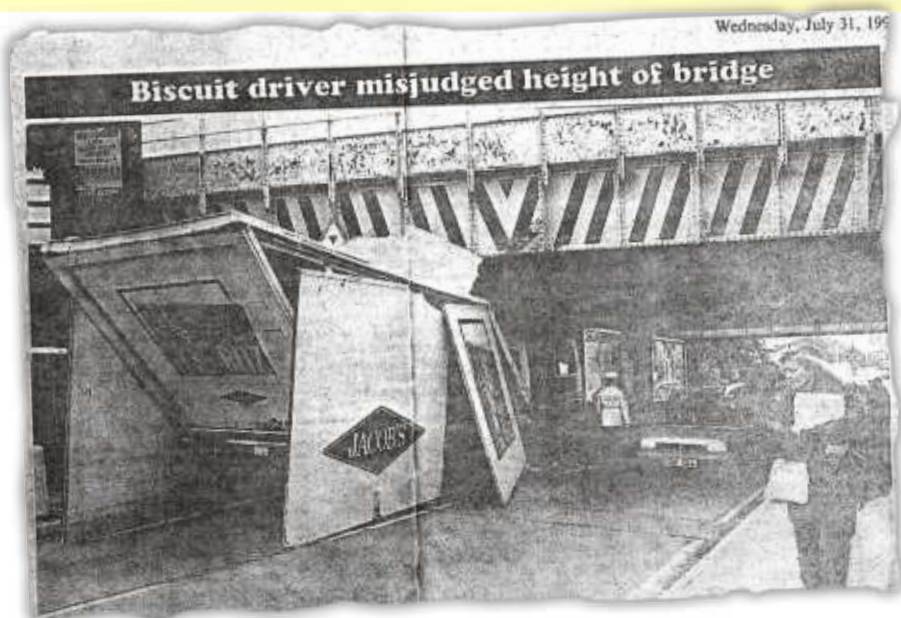


There are some more shots from old 8mm footage, taken on a cold and frosty Saturday morning in October 1970. Yours truly was in cab of a TK, with my father making an adjustment under the side bonnet and driver Peter Phillips in front of his vehicle.



By then, the company had amalgamated with Peak Freans, Huntley & Palmers and Mackintosh Sweets and we were now called ABMAC Deliveries. We only had one vehicle in Mackintosh livery, which was a Commer Bantam, but that was inside our workshops at the time of filming these scenes and the old movie cameras of the day did not produce good indoor shots, unless you used a special film.

I have also attached some photos of when we became Nabisco Group Ltd, including your's truly either entering and exiting the VMU at Belvedere depot in a 11:11 Freighter. The ERF was from our Reading depot and the Leyland Cruiser, A301 WRX, was based at Belvedere. I am almost certain that the driver was Bob Francis.





In the last lot of photos, we were now called the Jacobs Bakery, as Nabisco had been bought out and broken down into smaller companies. The pictures show the new livery, and our Liverpool Foden shunter which had been restored into its original livery was pictured outside my workshops at Belvedere depot. There are two photos of it being restored at Liverpool workshops by the late Mike Roberts, plus a Huntley & Palmer replica vehicle that was used for promotional work. I also used it to collect spares and 'nip home' for lunch in it.



Believe it or not, there is a Ford Cargo that had gone under a low bridge near Iwer, Bucks, E301 DJH; I earned a few hours overtime on that job. The vehicle was classed as a write off, but the cab and

chassis was still usable. There are also some more recent photos, where the trailers carry the livery but are contracted out to other hauliers.

It all came to an end for me in 1990 and,

if I remember correctly, the whole lot finished in about 1993-4. The company continues under the McVities banner and the name of Jacobs is only used for the Cream Crackers and snack biscuits.



# Ward LaFrance at work



The Ward LaFrance parked in the Albany yard. Every year, when the Hoppings came to Newcastle Town Moor, it rained. The Ward was always used to tow showmen off the site. (Norman Chapman)

**Norman Chapman** tells us about an ex-military recovery vehicle still working in recent years.

In the October 2015 issue, Andy Taylor and Barry Fenn went to Kelsall Steam & Vintage Rally, where Andy saw a Ward LaFrance recovery vehicle in authentic US military garb and wondered if this was the only one of its type in the UK. I am unsure if it is indeed the only one today, but things have a habit of coming out of the woodwork when the interest gets going. Not so long ago, at least one of the type lived and worked up in the North East; read on for its story.

## Albany Motors

Albany Motors is a company based at Saltmeadows Road, overlooking the River Tyne at Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, which specialises in all kinds of vehicle recovery, repair and MOT testing. The business was formed around 45 years ago by Tommy Bowman. Tommy, like a lot of recovery operators, sourced his own choice of vehicles from auctions or on the secondhand market.

Tommy was also an avid collector of ex-military kit of all kinds. Scout cars, ambulances and jeeps were just a few of the types of vehicles which satisfied his interest. There was still a host of ex-US army equipment around at this time, the legendary Diamond T having a reputation among the recovery fraternity as a



Above: Well, that's how we found the machine in the morning. (All pictures Jeff Bowman, unless otherwise stated)

good, solid and reliable truck. Tommy bought a couple of Diamond Ts, one was fitted with a recovery crane while the other was a 6x4 ballast box tractor.

## An eggcup-full of Ward LaFrance history

The purchase of other ex-US military kit included a Ward LaFrance M1A1 tank recovery vehicle, which came complete with the original Garwood-manufactured winch,

power crane and front-mounted winch. The wagon had six wheel drive and the type was made in large numbers for the war effort from 1943. When the demand for the truck could not be met by the Ward LaFrance company, Kenworth was asked to step in and produced a very similar truck.

The New York-based LaFrance company had been formed in 1918, for the manufacture of lightweight haulage trucks from 2½ to 7 tons payload. After World War II, the company also





**Left:** The volunteer ties the metal rope around the back of the Cat.

**Below:** Stuart Walker and the Ward. The wagon needed to be wire roped to the Drott to keep it from sliding.



enjoyed success in the US civilian haulage market with a number of heavier tractor and rigid models. The thread which runs through the company since its formation was the specialism in fire-fighting chassis, until the company folded in 1979.

### CFT 396V

The Albany M1A1, when bought, was fitted with the original Waukesha six cylinder petrol engine. This thirsty motor was later removed and uniquely replaced by a Leyland 410 Power Plus diesel.

One job which fitter Stuart Walker and the Ward went on was in 1982; the recovery of a Caterpillar tracked loader. Some 'good for nothing, too much time on their hands' individual(s) decided it would be a good idea to see if the Cat could swim. This happened on the site of the old pit head at Wardley, Gateshead, where the Cat was parked up for the weekend. The machine must have been started with a screwdriver and no doubt would have done a few circuits of the site until the thrill wore off, ending up in a pond.



**Above:** Go on, go on, nearly there.

Unsure if these 'rays of sunshine' got their bottom halves wet, they probably just aimed the Cat at the pond and let it run. The Ward arrived and a volunteer was found to tie a wire rope around the ripper on the rear of the machine. The crane winch was used to slowly tow the Cat out of the drink, but the wagon lost its footing and started to slide. There was tracked Drott working on the site

and this machine was called on to help with the recovery. The wagon's front end was wire roped to the Drott, which stopped it sliding. It took around half a shift to recover the Cat.

The Ward was used on a similar recovery at the site of what would become the Metro Centre Shopping complex at Swalwell, Gateshead. This time it was another Caterpillar, but a heavier D8 dozer which was preparing

the site for construction. The old industrial site proved to be unstable and, as the D8 was working, the ground gave way and the Cat fell in. This time, the Ward was assisted by one of Albany's Diamond Ts for stability.

The Ward remained in US army green, complete with its original army number on the sides of the bonnet, and no attempt was made to change this. When Albany was finished with the wagon, it saw service with two other owners in the UK. Rumour has it, the truck is still alive and well and resides in Belgium.

## Company history not forgotten

The current Albany lightweight recovery fleet includes three Renault Midlums, fitted with versatile Truk International Slideback flatbed bodies. On one particular vehicle, the roots and origins of the company are remembered with some tasteful artwork. RX 59 HSN has murals of some of the old fleet on the cab and on the off-side cab door is the Ward LaFrance.



Above: Result! Do you think it'll start?



A bigger job saw the Ward teaming up with the Diamond T in the rescue of a Caterpillar D8 dozer. This was in the clearing of the site for the Gateshead Metro Shopping Centre.



Above: A suspended lift and solid bar were required to move this accident-damaged Bedford TK from the A69.



Above: Albany history remembered, with the Ward LaFrance on the door of a current recovery Renault. (Norman Chapman)



# Rally Round-up

*We have so many rally reports from all our regular correspondents, we really have to ration them or they will fill the magazine, which will not please some readers, so here is a selection of the interesting vehicles they saw at rallies in the summer, to cheer us up in these dark damp winter days. We'll look at some of the autumn events in the next issue...*



**Above:** Looking back to the Kirkby Stephen rally at Easter, a feature of the event is the bus service between the rally sites. Among the vehicles in use was this Alexander-bodied Leyland Tiger Cub in Alexander Fife livery. (Tracey Johnson)



**Above:** Remembering that this year saw the 50th anniversary of the first Ford Transits to hit the road in the UK, among the vehicles seen at the Truckfest event at Malvern on July 5th was this 1977-registered Transit 35 cwt dropside. (Barry Fenn)



**Above:** Early Ford Cargos are becoming few and far between, especially in good condition. This 1982 example looks like 'a handy little recovery truck, ready for work' at Truckfest, Malvern in July. (Barry Fenn)



**Above:** The Bedford Enthusiasts Club had a stand at the Vauxhall-Bedford Rally at Billing Aquadrome, Northampton, on July 11-12th, featuring a number of vehicles, including this Bedford 'Chevanne' and HCB-Angus bodied J2 fire appliance. (Bedford Enthusiasts Club)



**Above:** New on the scene this summer was CSV 987, a 1952 AEC Mammoth Major, originally a military refueller, but now presented as an Esso road tanker by Graham Charles of the Waterside Historic Vehicle Club, seen at the annual Cart Marking ceremony, held at the Guildhall, London, on July 15th. (Jim King)



**Above:** This 1965 Ford Thames Trader tipper, BHU 180C, has been added to the preserved fleet of Tony McGovern of Willesden, London, NW10, and seen at the Cart Marking Ceremony, Guildhall, London, as well as other rallies. (Jim King)





**Left:** The 1959 Leyland Beaver, 665 MTB, now in Tesco livery and part of the William Hunter Collection, from Tarleton, Lancashire, was taken to the Cart Marking Ceremony by Ian Halsall, the collection manager. (Jim King)

**Below:** Two interesting commercials seen among the 500 exhibits at the 60th Anniversary Somerset Steam & Country Show on July 16-18th, were this 1951 Morris LC3 van, MYD 626, and 1961 Ford Thames Trader, LEU 243. (Simon Martin)



**Left:** Two more vehicles seen at the Somerset rally were this 1956 Ford Thames 4D platform lorry, XYA 825, and a very unusual Albion six-wheeled ex-military chassis, bodied as a recovery vehicle, KSJ 251. (Simon Martin)



**Above:** The varied line-up at the Somerset event included this AEC Mandator, Scammell Pioneer, Atkinson Borderer, Austin K4 and the Albion recovery vehicle. (Simon Martin)



**Right:** The 51st Welland Steam & Country Rally, held at the regular venue of Woodside Farm on 24th-26th July 2015, organized by the Ross-on-Wye Steam Engine Society, featured a wide range of different vehicles of all types. This 1965 ERF KV platform lorry (probably ex-Showerings) and Fordson tractor made for a very attractive combination. (Ian Young)

**Below:** One of the older historic commercial vehicles at Welland this year was this Ford Model AA one-tonner, dating from 1934. (Ian Young)



**Right:** The working field at Welland is a big draw for many enthusiasts and you never know what you're going to find there. This lovely Foden six-wheel dumper truck, owned by the Pearson Brothers of Coventry, was spotted at the very top of the hill. (Ian Young)



**Above:** A Chevrolet 4x4 cargo truck makes its way through the mud at Welland to get to the military display section. Thankfully the mud dried out during the day thanks to the glorious sunshine on the Saturday. (Ian Young)





Above: With the Malvern Hills in the background the sun beats down on a 1951 Guy Otter flatbed truck sporting a very attractive paint scheme. (Ian Young)



Above: An outstanding recently completed restoration is this AEC Mammoth Major, now back in the livery of Rosser of Pontlliw. (Ian Young)



Above: This small Atkinson four-wheeler from 1952, complete with a container with living accommodation, was one of the interesting commercials seen at the Driffield Steam & Vintage Rally on August 8th. (Janet Ulliott)



Above: Mark Carrington of King Trailers has been causing considerable interest at several rallies this summer with his Hull-registered 1965 Scammell Scarab 6-tonner, seen here at Driffield. (Janet Ulliott)



Above: Moving on to the Classic Van and Pick-up Show at the Heritage Motor Centre, Gaydon on August 9th, not surprisingly, the Transit Van Club was well-represented, with leading light, Peter Lee's immaculate early van, GYH 194C from 1965, to the fore. (Jim King)



Above: The Transit was not only successful in the UK. This left hand drive example for the mid-1970s was one of two at the show imported from Germany, where they had served their time with a fire brigade. (Len Jefferies)





Above: Not quite forgotten are the coachbuilt parcel vans on Transit chassis, by the likes of Walker, Hawson and many others, typified by these two survivors seen at Gaydon in August. (Chris Andrews)



Above: The Post Office Vehicle Club stand at Gaydon, which featured this Morris J2, along with a Bedford HA, Mini van, prewar Morris Minor, Morris Js and several BSA Bantams: cue that old joke about 'red and throbbing...' (Jim King)



Above: There is usually an interesting selection of hearses on a variety of chassis types of various ages at the Classic Van and Pick-up Show, like this Ford V8 Pilot-based example. (Len Jefferies)



Above: This ambulance of the Pressed Steel Company Division Oxford was based on the Austin A55 van. Almost worth being poorly to get a ride in this one? (Len Jefferies)



Above: Mini vans have become incredibly valuable in recent years and surprisingly rare. This was a lovely genuine original early example at Gaydon, with a later and even rarer pick-up behind. (Chris Andrews)



Above: Among a good number of motor caravans at the show – they seem to survive much better than the vans on which they are based – included this Dodge 'Spacevan' with elevating roof. (Chris Andrews)



Above: Sporting the joint Austin-Morris badge of the early 1970s, this J4 was helping uphold the Morris-Commercial tradition of success in the light van market. (Len Jefferies)





Above: Not all the Fords at the show were Transits. Beautifully restored as company service van, this E84W was surrounded by interesting vans and pick-up of all makes in the display area. (Chris Andrews)



Above: There was naturally a good turn-out of Morris Minor-based light commercials, including this nice split-screen van and the pick-up behind it. (Chris Andrews)



Above: OK, I admit that as the editor I'm biased, but I couldn't resist including this lovely 1958 Suffolk-registered Ford 300E 7cwt, which takes me right back to a 1970 holiday in a similar vehicle... (Chris Andrews)



Above: There was a good turn-out of lorries and buses at the Leyland Gathering in June, most of which we've seen at other rallies this summer, but a few vehicles stood out at the Great British Lorry Day at Leyland on Sunday, August 23rd, like this Scammell Trunker, complete with its tanker trailer in the livery used by Shellmex-BP for 'black oil' deliveries. (Keith Baldwin)



Above: Many transport people retain a soft spot for the Guy Big J, typified by these two late examples, splendidly restored in TJ Wall livery, seen at Leyland. (Keith Baldwin)



Above: A fine restoration of an early post-war ERF 44G dropside, arriving at the Leyland Great British Lorry Day. (Keith Baldwin)



## PERKINS, PRIMROSE AND CULLENS

With reference to H Daulby's letter in issue 192, the Bedford 'A' Type was the first model in which Bedford fitted a diesel engine as original equipment. Although Perkins engines were fitted just before the war in 1938-9, only the Perkins 'P4' and 'P6' were fitted in the 'A' Type.

Referring to the 'S' Type, this was launched with only a petrol engine available, offering 7 ton loads at 30 mph, until the Perkins 'R6' was fitted. This had early mechanical problems, but when the Mk 2 came along, it was OK.

Also mentioned were the W H Cullen provision stores in the London area. Enclosed are four pictures of Seddons used by Cullens: a 25 cwt van with a Perkins P3; two Seddon Mk 7L with coachbuilt bodies, fitted with Perkins P4 engines; two Seddon Mk 5SP/2 artics being loaded; and another Seddon artic delivering to a Cullens shop. These had Perkins P6 engines.

Barry Fenn sent a picture of a Leyland 'Chinese Six'. Enclosed is a picture of a Bedford TK, with a twin-steer conversion by Primrose, claimed to be the first one to be converted for general haulage. It was used to carry road-making materials out of Bradgate Quarry, Groby, operated by W E Snow, a company which went back to the 1930s, when Reos, Seddons



and Austins were used, and DAFs in later years. (We have a number of Primrose pictures in the Stevens-Stratten collection, with which we'll put together an article in the future – Ed)

The other picture shows an Austin 5-tonner, with a petrol engine. This was taken outside the headquarters of what became Leicester City Bus, in October 1946 – note the tram lines in the foreground. The vehicle cost £704, with pilot tipping gear, paint and signwriting.





## THAT CHINESE SIX AGAIN

With reference to issue 192 and the letter from Barry Fenn of Telford, who mentions the Birds Eye/Moss and Lovatt Chinese Six Leyland Freighter, I can report that the vehicle has been saved by Moss and Lovatt and is tucked away safely!

However, as an aside, I include a couple of photos; the first was taken when it was presumably for sale at Malcolm Harrison's, Tittensor, Stoke on Trent, on 26th February 1994; you can see it had been used as a flat with a Hiab-type crane behind the cab.

The second was taken when I drove it on a short trip to give a fellow enthusiast a run out in it, when it was just about to go into service with Moss and Lovatt. I used to do some casual work for M & L and the late David Edwards allowed us to have a little indulgence!

The second photo was taken just 10 months after the first, on December 3rd, just two days before my birthday: what a great present! I hope you and the readers find this interesting.

**Carl Johnson, Cheadle, Staffs**





## HAULIERS FROM HULL

What a fantastic photo spread featuring old hauliers from Hull. The following information may be of interest to readers. Hunters of Hull could trace its history in transport back to 1870. All except the Bedford 'S' Type were photographed at the Lorne Street depot in 1960.

Commercial Motor did a feature on Hunters, which appeared in the October 14th issue. The fleet livery was green and red. Hunters sold out to C Shaw Lovell, a Bristol-based transport company, in January 1966. Later, in late 1970, Lovells sold the Hull operation to the Key Warehousing & Transport Co Ltd.

The photographs on page 40 were taken at Key's premises on Clough Road, Hull. The gentleman at the foot of the page was Mr Tom Jackson, one of the directors, the other being James McGregor. In the background, the six storey building is on the other side of the River Hull, near to Stoneferry Bridge. It is believed to have been the premises of the Premier Oil and Cake Mills, in Ann Watson Street. It was featured in the TV programme 'Danger UXB'; and was meant to be a Grimsby warehouse, which was on fire after a German air raid, using 'butterfly bombs'.

I have it on good authority from a friend of mine, Brian Cook, who worked for Key Warehousing & Transport, that the material in the barrels and the heap on the ground was not coal, but raw silicon, which was imported from Sweden. It was also this material which was being loaded in barrels onto the Robertson Dale Albion



artic on Hull Docks and the Reeds Commer in the yard at Stoneferry Bridge.

Brian, along with his father, also worked for Hull & Glasgow Road Carriers. Commercial Motor also did a feature on this company, in the August 17th, 1960 issue. Fleet livery was a very smart blue, with gold leaf lettering. Hull & Glasgow sold out to H Fallingham in 1970. The company's depot, 'transport house' in Clarence Street, was originally the Hull depot of Holdsworth & Hanson Ltd, later becoming a BRS depot, passing to Hull & Glasgow in the 1950s.

Reader Bros was formed in 1945 by George and Ken Reader and specialised in fruit transport to the markets. Subsidiaries included Metcalf & Co (Hull) Ltd and Maddox & Marlow Ltd, from Brandesburton. At its peak in the 1960s, Readers operated

nearly 80 lorries. In 1972, George and Ken decided to sell up and liquidate the company assets. However, the following year, George's sons, Keith and Geoff Reader, started their own company 'Reader Haulage', operating from Brandesburton, which is still trading to this day, using the familiar grey livery of old.

Incidentally, the old Key Warehousing & Transport Co Ltd premises still exist at Stoneferry Bridge. The front of the building has been re-clad and is the home of Vulcan Windows, a double glazing company.

The picture from my collection shows a Scammell Highwayman, HKH 937D, fleet no KA17, at the Stoneferry Bridge, Clough Road, Hull, with the 'Grimsby' warehouse in the background. Fleet livery was red and duck egg blue. **Dave Mortimer, Hull**

## HUNTERS OF HULL

I enjoyed the great feature on Hull Hauliers. I remember one of Hunters' Commer's coming to grief on the A630 Doncaster to Rotherham road, loaded with wooden vats of butter. There is a bad camber on the bend at Hooton Roberts the Commericals. The lorry lost its load and butter went skittling down the hill; it was still edible once we removed the top layer of gravel... It was loaded just as in the picture in the magazine. Here's a picture posted on Facebook of a Hunters' Leyland Comet coming off worse with a lampost. Great magazine.

**Alan Graham, via e-mail**

*Thanks for this; now we know the colours of the Hunters vehicles and very nice they must have looked.*



## SAD AEC

Just back from a week's holiday, when I found this AEC abandoned on a beach in Dumfries and Galloway. I wonder if any one recognises it and whether it might be rescued?

**Roy Dodsworth, via e-mail**



## PICTURES WANTED

I was hoping that you could help me, as I am doing some research on a Lorry Park and I am looking for photos. The Lorry Park was in Shepherd's Bush, London, on Wood Lane, opposite the BBC studios. It now has Westfields Shopping Centre built on it. Could you possibly find out from your archives if you have any photos of this Lorry park in the 1970s or '80s? Or if you could maybe point me in the right direction to get some images.

I have already been in contact with The Library in Shepherd's Bush but they have nothing on it. This is why I am contacting vintage road, lorries and truck magazines in the hope of finding something. I was wondering if maybe you could put something in your magazine, as maybe one of your readers might have images.

I hope you can help.

**C A Morgan, via e-mail**

*I remember the lorry park you mean, but don't have any pictures. Can any readers help?*

## VANS AND SOUTHDOWN

Thanks for another excellent Vintage Roadscene, though I missed the period traffic picture in 'Tailscene'. A long-lived Ford D-Series is admirable, but not as interesting, to me as a London traffic scene of the 1930s.

In my letter Van Comments, I mentioned that I had a number of photos of mini-artics. I have looked these out now, and have Ford Transit, Mercedes-Benz 508D and several generations of Iveco, including a very long one at Heathrow for carrying luggage trolleys. Let me know if you would like to see them.

My mother would love to have seen Malcolm Wright's article on Southdown, as she remembered these buses from World War I, when she lived at Storrington. This would have been on the Pulborough-Worthing route. When we were in Switzerland in 1955, she recognised the Southdown livery on a coach, probably an AEC Regal IV (You'll upset the Southdown purists, it was more likely a Leyland Tiger - Ed) in Interlaken, and had a chat with the driver about the 'old days' of Southdown, though I doubt if he was old enough to have driven during World War I.

**Nick Georgano, via e-mail**

*Yes please, we'd like to see those mini-artic pictures. These unusual vehicles are much overlooked and only popular with a minority of operators.*

## BRITISH ROAD SERVICES

Having just read the Vintage Roadscene Road Haulage Archive 'BRS - Look back at the Golden Years', I think this is the best collection of pictures of BRS lorries I have seen.

Having worked for BRS Southampton in 1964-66, I was delighted to see on page 10 the semi-low loaders used on the Pirelli Cables contract. This picture was, I believe, taken at Regents Park Depot in Southampton. You are right about the Ergo cab being a Mandator, not a Mercury, as the single big drums weighed 16 tons each.

I was even more delighted when I turned the page and saw on page 12 the Mandator I was driving on this contract in 1966, VYL 369, fleet no AS62. During most of 1965, I was driving eight-wheelers but, sadly, by the end of the year, all the eight-leggers had gone.

In the introduction on pages 4 and 5, there is mention of the changes to the fleet numbers. Ours at Southampton changed sometime in 1965. I have a picture of a Leyland Comet artic I was driving in the early part of the year with the fleet no 2A177, but soon after, I went up onto the eight-wheelers, driving an AEC Mammoth Major, fleet no AS3, registration number NUC 983.

It was a boyhood dream to drive for the BRS and when I did, for me it really was the 'golden years'.

Great magazine, keep up the good work and all the best for the future.

**Peter Fay, Bristol**

## PICTURE QUALITY

I have bought Vintage Roadscene issue 192 for November; good content as usual, however, the Ford & Slater photos and others are very poorly printed. The middle pages have fallen out as well. In the words of a long-departed transit shed gaffer: 'consider yourself bollocked'

**Stewart Edge, via e-mail**

*I'm sorry you didn't like the way some of the Ford & Slater pictures came out. As I pointed out at the time, the prints or negatives from which they came were badly scratched. We take the line that, in many cases, the content of pictures is more important than the quality. Our designer and printer do a great job of reproducing all the pictures to the highest possible standards. I hope the pages falling out is one-off. It's yet to happen to me, but thank you for pointing out the problem.*



## CONTENTS

Firstly I must start by saying how much I enjoy your excellent magazine and how much I look forward to each issue, as well as the excellent quarterly specials on BRS etc.

With regard to your October editorial asking for readers' thoughts I'm not interested in features on models, as I think these are very well covered by other magazines. For the same reason. I'm not interested in 'news' features about preservation projects, etc. Rally coverage is worth including, but I would prefer less, maybe two or three pages at the most.

For me, what makes the magazine so special is the fabulous mix of high quality black and white photos. They are very evocative, depicting not just the vehicles but also the street scenes.

Hope this is helpful, thanks for a great magazine.

**Pete Gomm, via e-mail**

## CONTENTS 2

I enjoyed the October issue as usual and was interested in your comments in the editorial piece.

My comments concerning the magazine are as follows: I think you have managed to combine all the interesting things about our transport industry. My main interests are road haulage with passenger transport as good second, military vehicles from my service in the RASC in the early 1950s when we still had quite a lot of World War II vehicles. I do like the history of haulage companies and I have written a history of Harold Wood & Sons, which is in the hands of Nyehead, and has been for a number of years and still not published...

I am not all that interested in cars but do read the articles, the rally pages I would leave out as I'm sure the other journals cover them, I like to see vehicles as they worked, but I do appreciate they have a

big following. I am a vehicle modeller, so the model pages are of interest but I can see that quite a lot of readers are not interested and think that is covered in the model press. The magazine is 'Vintage' I think you should keep it as such, however, I know some people will not agree with my comments but hope they are of use to you.

**Jack Raine, Chester.**

## CONTENTS 3

In reply to your appeal in the October editorial, I think the balanced mix of articles in Vintage Roadscene is just right. Personally, it is the detailed captions accompanying the photographs that bring to life and adds so much to the interest.

The 'Tailscene' article in this issue is a perfect example of this and shows the magazine at its best. It takes time and effort to research each of the vehicles, buildings and even the newsagent's posters, so this is much appreciated.

As for suggestions for future articles, I often feel that the history of roads and main routes is overlooked. The origins of roads; how they developed; the companies that carried freight and passengers over them, not to mention the vehicles and drivers that made it all possible. For example, what was the cargo? Where did it come from and what was it for? How long did it take? Where did you take breaks and how much of the original route still exists?

It's unusual now for freight to have to travel through town centres, which is probably a good thing. However, by-passes and motorways have made road travel a bland and less interesting experience.

The history of trunk routes and timed services established by pioneers, such as Fisher Renwick, linking distant cities by driving through the night, often in blackout conditions, fascinates me.

To do this in now primitive vehicles, with little driver comfort and fighting the

inevitable tiredness was heroic. The fish runs from ports like Aberdeen and goods from agricultural areas to markets in the large conurbations all took planning and determination to achieve.

Moving on to the present, it would be interesting to read about any older vehicles still working for a living, perhaps on film work or wedding hire. There are several firms operating classic buses and coaches for wedding receptions and corporate events these days. After all, these vehicles have come down through time and are a direct link with the past.

How about taxis, the vehicles and the companies which made them and ran them, Austin Low-loaders, FX3 and 4, Metro Cabs and even Winchesters. These are some of the hardest working vehicles around, clocking up tremendous mileages. Most of us have memories of taxi journeys.

Finally, if possible, perhaps a few more columns devoted to news and events. The rally diary is really useful but, in addition, information about new projects and developments at museums and societies, especially 'barn-find' vehicles, would really top it off.

I really enjoyed Malcolm Bates' Gaydon report and think he is right to open up the debate on original liveries and presenting vehicles in 'working clothes' condition, as opposed to showroom standard. Many vehicle owners are inhibited from showing their interesting vehicles, because they show the signs of work and age.

**Mike Gosling, Wymondham, Norfolk**

*Plenty to think about there, Mike. Any offers of articles on the subjects mentioned – all of which I'd like to see myself, if we can get the information and/or pictures – or thoughts about adding more news and events columns – always supposing anybody sends me items before they have already appeared elsewhere...?*

## JESTER'S CORNER

Don't wind me up! It never ceases to amaze me the comments submitted by some readers of Roadscene – you couldn't make them up! With respect to Alan Wilson of Kendal, did your elderly relation honestly say, I quote: "The Leyland clock was slow to shake the likes of him out of his comfort zone"? She might have had to wind up the clock, but you shouldn't wind up the Jester from Leicester!

Anyone who thinks going over Shap in my day was in a 'comfort zone' must

have lived on another planet! Regarding the 'real man's environment', up to your armpits in ice, snow, fog and winds, freezing your ..... off. If Alan's done all this, "Welcome aboard, mate, if not, show us that have 'done it' some respect.

(I was having a bad day when I wrote the first part of this letter, I've come down to ground level now!) Reading his letter again, he did know what he was talking about, it was not a comfort zone. He must have worked for the highways department, not pushing a wagon like me. He said it was his pleasure to work

on Shap. Well, it was my pleasure to see his mates coming to drag me out of a snowdrift. Don't forget driving rain and sharp corners and pulling your mirrors in...

Thanks to you and all your mates, 'Kendal Kid', if you helped me out, we had to be hard men then. One day, I might go to Kendal to visit that Leyland clock once more, 'wind it up', and maybe have a pint with the Kendal Kid. My wife said she bets Mike Forbes must think the same as she does, that I'm a pain in the ....

**Colin Pratt, the Jester from Leicester.**

## LIME SPREADING

I am a retired lorry driver, who has worked on quarry deliveries from Steetley Quarry, Lynclys, near Oswestry. In the 1950s-'60s, Steetley was big on lime spreading, using American half-tracks, Bedford QL ex-army vehicles, Ford four wheel drives and Chevrolets. Fordson Major tractors with trailer spreaders were also used, until Massey Ferguson brought out a land speed pto to pull Atkinson spreaders with QL axles.

Because the four-wheeled spreader was so high, Steetley had two Bedford 'S' Types and one Bedford TA for carrying lime, fitted with Pilot lift-up bodies, which tipped at cab height into the spreaders, to cut out shovelling.

**Duncan Stuart Watkins, Oswestry**

*If anybody has pictures of lime-spreading vehicles like the ones mentioned here, I'm sure we'd all like to see them...*

## BOOK COMMENTS

Thank you very much for reviewing my book, 'Trucks In The 1980s, The Photos Of David Wakefield'. It's always a thrill to see it mentioned in magazines such as your excellent publication. However, I would like to point out an error in the review, and also give an explanation to another comment. There are in fact two pictures of ERFs in the book, both in the tractor unit section and both of UK hauliers. There was supposed to be a third picture of a foreign-registered ERF draw-bar on the title page, but this was omitted by the publisher. The reason is very simple. 5M also publish the excellent series of books by Patrick Dyer, and Patrick in the past has used many of David's photos in his books so I was very careful not to duplicate any pictures Patrick had used, so as to give the reader value for money, who wants to buy two books with the same photos in them? At the very time I was preparing my book, Patrick was putting together a new book about the ERF marque, and I had indeed sorted what ERF pictures of David's I could find and sent them off, so Patrick could choose from them. As a result I wanted to be very careful of duplication, and only used two pictures that I had missed whilst sorting them for Patrick.

I chose the particular pictures I used in the book for specific reasons, I wanted to show the diversity of the haulage scene in the 1980s, but did not just want European manufacturers or hauliers to feature, so tried very hard to include UK trucks, so the readers would identify with at least one thing. However, David photographed anything that he came across, and as is rightly pointed out in the review the swing towards the use of European, in particular Swedish makes, was hugely evident in his collection. There weren't many UK truck makers left, and many that were had been bought by overseas competitors, hence the lack of British lorries which is a real shame. I would have truly loved to include more Brits but sadly they were in a real decline by this time.

**Nick Ireland, via e-mail.**

## THOUGHTS ON SOUTHDOWN'S CHAIRMAN

With reference to Issue 192 of Vintage Roadscene and the article 'A Century of Southdown Motor Services, 1915-2015', the chairman, Mr Walter Flaxman French, was involved with The London and South Coast Haulage Company in 1915, with The East Kent Road Car Company in 1916 and with Maidstone & District Motor Services in 1923.

Meanwhile, around 1913, there was a Mr W F French, the owner of French's Garage and Motor Works at 314, Balham High Road. The company was advertised as 'Motor Jobmasters' and owned a fleet of 126 lorries, comprising Hallford, Straker Squire and Thomycroft vehicles. W F French was a pioneer of contract hire. 72 of his lorries were taken by The War

Department between 1914 and 1918. After the war, he rebuilt his fleet with Hallford, Daimler, and McCurd lorries.

The company changed its name in 1919 to The United Service Transport Company. W F French also owned Bluebelle Motors of Clapham Road, Brixton. This was a well-known coach operator in the 1930s and '40s, having been established by Red & White Services in 1923, then sold to United in 1945.

By this time, United Transport Service had more than 600 vehicles in the fleet, with garages at Balham, Brixton and Southfields. In the 1920s, United held contracts with the Daily Express, Sunday Express and Evening Standard, starting with vans based on RAF surplus

Crossleys. The newspaper vans were kept in a garage in Euston Road. The Beaverbrook Newspaper distribution contract was taken over by Hertz in 1967.

United also had the contract to distribute Bass Worthington ales throughout the London area. The beer lorries were garaged at Kings Cross. It wasn't until the 1960s that things changed. Bluebelle Motors was sold to George Ewer & Co in 1966. Bass Worthington merged with Charringtons Brewery in 1967 and Charringtons took over the distribution of Bass beer.

If Walter Flaxman French and W F French were the same man, he must have led a very busy life – and did he live in London or on The South Coast?

**H Daulby, Croydon**

## MILITARY ROLLER

I don't know if this falls under your remit, but I came across this photo of a road roller, which I took at Witham Specialist Vehicles in Lincolnshire, while attending a tender sale.

It wasn't in the sale, but I just liked the design, so I took the photo as it was like nothing I'd seen before. However, I never did find out what it is, and I've tried searching the Internet and drawn a blank so I wondered if you might want to put it in your pages as a 'Can you identify this vehicle?' sort of item? Just a thought, but I would love to know what it is!

**Ian Young, via e-mail**





## OBITUARY BILL MASON 1931-2015

Vintage Roadscene reader, Bill Mason was taken on his final journey to Woodlands Crematorium, Coleshill on October 8th 2015 by the Vintage Lorry Funerals 1950 Leyland Beaver.

Bill was born in Artillery Street, in the Garrison Lane District of Birmingham, where his father was a coalman. The family moved to Stechford when Bill was three and he went to school there. His first job was as a fireman on the railway, based at Saltley Station in Birmingham. Bill saw some good views on his travels, as he was often on the Settle to Carlisle line.

He did his National Service in the Tank Regiment, which was quite appropriate, being born in Artillery Street, and was stationed in Germany. This time meant a lot to Bill and he attended the Tank Corps re-reunions once a month in Birmingham City Centre.

After coming out of the Army, Bill went back to the railway; however, he had already decided he wanted to make his living in haulage. He saved up enough money while shovelling coal into the firebox to buy his first lorry in 1957. Bill used a tipper, shovelled refuse onto it from factories and homes, taking it to a tip, and Bill Mason (Transport) Ltd was born. The business grew to seven vehicles, some on sand and gravel work, then Bill moved into skip loaders on Leyland Lynx

chassis.

Bill was a grafter, but also a creature of habit. He always had a swim before he started work, he always got home for his tea and at 21.00 hours he would go to his local, the Marston Green Tavern for a pint or two.

Having no family to pass the business onto, Bill ran down the fleet to one vehicle which he drove himself. Sadly, when Bill was 77 years old he fell off the back of a skip loader and broke his leg. Under an anaesthetic for an operation to insert a plate in his leg, Bill had a major stroke and was in the Kingfisher Nursing Home for the remaining eight years of his life. On April 24th 2015, the care

home organised a party for Bill and his wife Maureen, to celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary.

When Bill passed away, Maureen went to Franklin Funeral Directors and booked a standard hearse. However, as she was getting into her car, Maureen noticed a picture of the 1950 Leyland Beaver in the window and went back inside and changed her arrangements. Bill is deeply missed by Maureen, his wife of 50 years, and their friends and relatives.

If you want to know more about the activities of the Leyland Beaver then ring David Hall on 01225 865346 or visit the website, [www.vintagelorryfunerals.co.uk](http://www.vintagelorryfunerals.co.uk)



# NEXT MONTH...

## TRAVELLERS' VEHICLES

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LEICESTER**

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# A Regal Queue

I could say: "Back by popular demand;" here is another street scene, but in Manchester, rather than London, and in 1957, rather than the late 1930s.

The picture comes from the Stevens-Stratten archive, which we have now secured for use in Vintage Roadscene, so we have plenty more for the future.

The picture was originally sent out to the press, to show urban congestion, in support of a campaign at the time. But when hasn't urban congestion been a problem...?

The photograph shows traffic queuing into central Manchester. This is actually Oxford Road, between Hulme and Chester Streets, with the traffic lined up at the traffic lights, in front of the Regal Cinema. These roads and the building are still there. The cinema is now the Dancehouse Theatre, which looks much smarter, now it has been cleaned up, to show the cream stone from which it was built in the late 1800s.

In May 1957, when the photograph was taken, the Regal was showing the 1956 film 'Backlash', a western, starring Richard Widmark and Donna Reed. In those days, of course, the cinema would be firmly closed until later in the day, while the shops were probably not open either, so there are relatively few pedestrians, hurrying to work.

The usual culprit held to be responsible for increasing congestion is always the private car. Interestingly enough, on the first corner on the right, there is a branch of BSM – the 'British School of Motoring' – complete with cleaning lady attending to the window display, while on the next corner is 'The Eagle Motor Co', with several second-hand cars on display. Both of these businesses were only likely to add more car drivers to make the problem worse. There is the almost inevitable Guinness advert above the car showroom, with a cartoon bear stealing the zoo-keepers drink.

As to the traffic, there are 15 buses in the shot, four commercials (just) visible, including two vans, plus 25 cars and one taxi. The leading bus is a Crossley DD42 with Crossley bodywork – with those shallow side windows towards the rear on both decks – CJA 780, of Stockport Corporation. With one other possible exception, the rest are Manchester Corporation buses, which mainly look like Burlingham-bodied Leylands or Daimlers, plus a couple of all-Crossley vehicles, the one passing Chester Street, further back, has the characteristic



'drooping' front upper windows of the Crossley bodies for Manchester.

Crossing from Hulme Street in the foreground are, unusually for those days, two foreign cars, a Fiat 1100 and Citroen Light 15, behind a Standard 8 or 10, just visible. The lorry with the canvas tilt is an Austin K2, with no fleetname visible, followed by an Austin A40, with a 'gown van' body. Coincidentally, there is another A40 gown van in the queue, this one with the earlier style of radiator grille.

The cars in the queue, from the front, as far as I can make out, are an Austin A40 Somerset, Ford Zephyr Mk I and Standard

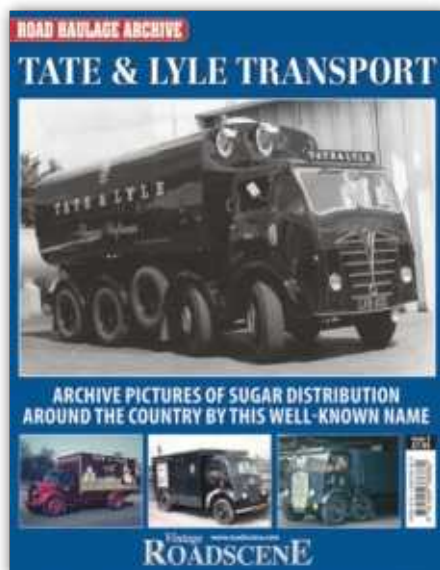
Vanguard Phase I; behind the van, a Morris Oxford, Austin A30, an early post-war Hillman, hiding behind a radiator muff, a 1950s Hillman Minx, Austin A70 Hampshire, beside an Austin A50, then a Ford V8 Pilot, Lanchester, Ford Consul, Vauxhall Cresta, another Consul, Daimler Consort, the Austin FX3 taxi, another Citroen, a 1940s Standard 8, Triumph Renown and a couple of 1950s Fords and a glimpse of a Luton van.

All in all, a veritable feast of 1950s vehicles for us to enjoy – although not at all what the people who had the picture taken in the first place would have wanted. Times change, the problems don't.

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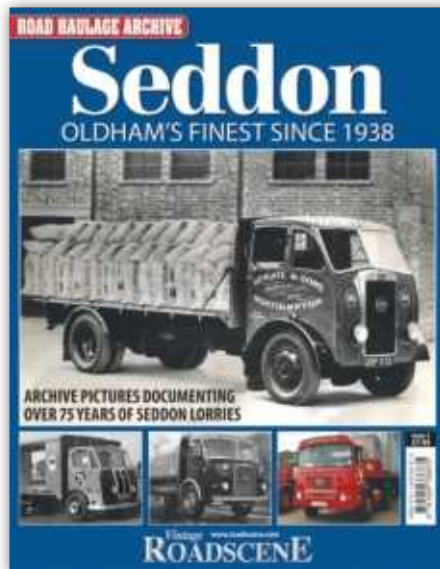
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# THIS MONTH'S NEW RELEASES

1:76 Scale '00' gauge precision diecast models



*Details May Be Subject to Change*



**26412 Daimler Utility Bus** **WILTS & DORSET**  
Continuing the Centenary theme of Wilts & Dorset is this attractive Daimler Utility displaying adverts for Millers 'Dorsage' sausages. Fleet number 263 registered CWV 781 is shown working route 19 to Salisbury via Blandford Camp.

**SEPTEMBER RELEASE**



**36712 Plaxton SLF Dart** **NORFOLK GREEN**  
The popularity of Norfolk Green has created much respect for the fleet which was recently acquired by Stagecoach. Registered PX05 EMV, fleet number 34700 is working route 10 to Hunstanton prior to being painted in Stagecoach livery.

**AUGUST RELEASE**



**18017 Daimler Fleetline** **BOURNEMOUTH CORPORATION**  
Originally destined for Belfast ALJ 340B was one of two vehicles switched to Bournemouth Corporation when they had a delay in supply. Fleet number 40 works route 6 to Bournemouth Square, this vehicle has since been the subject of a loving restoration.

**JUNE RELEASE**



**15719 Plaxton Panorama** **LONDON COUNTRY N.B.C.**  
This ex Barton Transport Plaxton Panorama is depicted in London Country's livery during the N.B.C. period. Registration number MRR 802K, fleet number RN 2 would have been a comfortable ride for commuters on route 714 between Dorking and London.

**JUNE RELEASE**



**38122 Bristol VRT** **SOLENT BLUELINE**  
One of the most colourful liveries to be seen on a VRT is Solent Blue Line's fleet number 7, registered SDL 637J. Operating route 160 to Ocean Village, this model will complement our previous releases in this livery.

**SEPTEMBER RELEASE**



**17511 Leyland National MkII Long 1 Door** **HIGHLAND SCOTTISH**  
A smart looking livery that should be well received and please many of our collectors of Scottish Models is this Leyland National. Fleet number N13 F, registered AST 155W is working route 45 to Lochy Bridge.

**OCTOBER RELEASE**



**14017 Bristol FLF Lodekka** **BRISTOL OMNIBUS**  
With the introduction of one man operated buses a revised livery was used and uniquely on this bus a darker green was used making this a must for Bristol Omnibus collectors. Registered 826 SHW, fleet number C71 33 is working route 87 to Warmley.

**OCTOBER RELEASE**



**25005 Bristol RELL Flat Front** **WEST YORKSHIRE N.B.C.**  
The West Yorkshire fleet is a favourite with many collectors and we receive many requests for more models from this fleet. In N.B.C. livery this flat screened RELL registered BWU 552H and numbered 1287 in the fleet is working route 16 to Harrogate.

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